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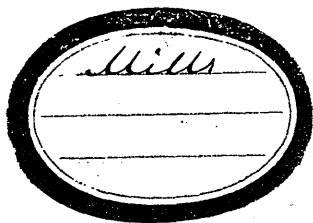
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SERMONS,
UPON
CHOSEN LIBERTIES
VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS.

BY JONATHAN L. POMEROY,
Minister of Worthington.

NORTHAMPTON:
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PREFACE.

THOUGH he has preached many times, the author of this little volume has written but few sermons. Poor eyes; ill health; and the general wish of his people for private lectures, and sermons at funerals; induced him, in the early part of his ministry, to make an attempt at extemporaneous preaching; and having found it, in his judgment, the most profitable, he has, with few exceptions, preached extemporaneously, since the time when he began.

Two only of these sermons, have ever been transcribed. Whatever may be found in them which differs from the Bible, must be incorrect of course, for that is the standard of truth; and the reader will judge for himself. Errors of small importance; such as respect capital letters; orthography; punctuation; or breaks, are always to be expected; and they may be charged, some to the pen, and some to the press. Whatever errors can be, will be corrected in a list of errata.

The author is but little known beyond the limits of his own parish; and he does not expect that his book will make its way into the circles of taste and erudition; but should it be of any service to some who are in the humble walks of life, his labor would not be altogether lost. Having spent many years with his people; and having had a much larger share in their esteem and affection, than he ever deserved; he is willing to incur some expense, that he may leave a token of his regard for them, which, those who are disposed, may look at, when he himself shall be out of sight. A time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord he has repeatedly witnessed during his ministry, and he still confidently hopes, that since a vine has been planted in this place, the boar out of the wood will not be suffered to waste it, nor the wild beast to devour it.

ERRATA.

<i>Page.</i>	<i>Line.</i>		<i>Read.</i>
22	11	it all	it at all.
23	4 from bottom	affected	effected.
25	18	their	this.
31	12	plead the human	plead human.
38	5	maternal	natural.
41	6 from bottom	having	leaving.
50	9 "	apostles cite	apostle cites.
52	12	exalted	extolled.
64	14	revolution	revelation.
72	9	know I	know whom I.
73	20	as	or.
78	19	watch	wait.
84	9	cymbal	symbol.
95	9 from bottom	their	these.
150	2	on	in.
174	19	scornful	sorrowful.
180	18	For	In.
197	17	impart	import.
190	7	it all	it at all.
203	8 from bottom	arranged	arrayed.
231	9	had	has.
350	13	the	he.
264	8 from bottom	your	our.
268	10	even	between.
270	27	proper ties	properties.
771	17	designs	desires.
275	5	the	to.
276	6	instructive	instinctive.
288	28	unserious	censorious.

SERMON I.

UPON NEGLECTING THE GREAT SALVATION.

HEBREWS ii. 3.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

AMONG all the questions which we ask, is there one more important than this? All are interested in the consideration of it; and yet no question perhaps, engages less attention. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good, while the number is small of those who understand what good consists in, and who seek it in the proper way, by saying, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us! We look out for consequences in common matters; and hope, or fear, in some measure according to the magnitude of the object which we regard. But so sensual, and stupid, has sin made us, that we suppose our whole business to lie in this world, and expect neither good nor evil, except from such objects as we can see.

David inquires, Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He answers the question himself by observing, He hath said in his heart, Thou will not require it. This is the reason assigned for the contempt of the wicked; and it is a good one, because it explains it.

Is the conclusion of the wicked however, well founded, that God will not require an account of their conduct? We acknowledge ourselves to be accountable one to another, according to the relations which we sustain in society. Laws are made to point out our duty, and men are chosen

to enforce the observance of them. Now if there is a God, we are his creatures; and if we were brought into existence by him; and depend upon him for our support; can we, consistently, think, that we are under no obligation to him, and shall have no account to render to him of our conduct? It would be difficult to determine what constitutes accountability, if we are not accountable to God. What makes us accountable one to another? Is it the laws; or is it that state of things from which the laws originated?

This matter would be sufficiently clear, had we only the dictates of reason to govern us in our judgment. But we have the testimony of God himself. It is plainly to be seen, and it is solemnly communicated upon the pages of his Word. He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. If then it is certain, that God will judge the world in righteousness, and, that he has appointed a day to attend to the business, the question in our text is of the most solemn import; and ought never to be out of our minds.

The greatness of this salvation is first to be considered; and it appears in various particulars. The Author of this salvation is great. God was manifest in the flesh, manifest in the man Christ Jesus. Though many content themselves with the answer which the Jews gave to Christ's questions, when they told him, that he was the son of David; they appear not to be satisfied, from any thorough investigation; for there are difficulties in their way, too many, and too great, for them to remove. What did Christ come into the world to accomplish? Was not his business to make an atonement for sin; and consequently, was it not necessary, that his labors, and sufferings, should be meritorious, and in degree, equal to the demerit of those in whose behalf he undertook? If when we say that any thing is meritorious, we mean that he to whom it belongs is deserving of a reward on account of it, it is certain, that nothing, belonging to man, or any other creature, can be meritorious; for all creatures are entirely the property of God; and far more absolutely at his disposal, than a servant can be at the disposal of his master.

The first, and great, commandment for man is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This commandment can be explained in no other way than by supposing, that it requires us to manifest our love to God by the diligent exercise of every power and faculty which we possess. If all men are under such an obligation, it is evident, that merit is out of the question; for no one can do more than every one is bound in duty to do. Little as we know of other orders of beings, there can be no hazard in saying, that they are all subject to a law which is suited to their condition, and that their service is to be measured by their capacity to serve. It follows therefore, that no created being can make an atonement for the sins of others; because all created beings are charged to the full amount of their ability, and however faithful, cannot exceed what is required of them.

The spirit that spake to Eliphaz may speak to us upon this subject, and inform us how God regards his various intelligent creatures. Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly. How much less in them who dwell in houses of clay; whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth. Nothing could more clearly show the entire incompetency of men, and of angels, than this representation.

But by some it is maintained, that God, to whom all things are possible, might supply the deficiencies of any creature; and thus make an angel, or even a man, equal to the performance of the greatest task; equal to the accomplishment of the work of salvation. With whatever qualifications however, God might endue a creature, would he, by so doing make him any thing more than a creature, of a higher rank, with an increase of responsibility resting upon him equal to the increase of his powers? For aught we can determine, he who appears now as an idiot in this world, may in his progress through eternal ages, appear with more expanded intellect, than Gabriel has at present, and occupy a higher seat in heaven. Such a transformation would be astonishingly great, but would it be any thing

more than the transformation of a creature, from a low and bestial state, to one the most exalted, and illustrious?

One question will settle this business: can God make a creature independant? If he can, he can make a creature free from all obligation, and of course, capable of rendering service for others, which he is not bound to render on his own account.

This case involves such absurdity, that no one will so far sacrifice his understanding as to admit that it is possible. If the world is in such a situation as to make an atonement necessary for its salvation, from necessity, we ascribe the work to God. The Savior of sinners was made in the likeness of man, and appeared in the form of a servant, but he was as truly God as man. Is there consistency in applying to any creature the following remarkable words in the ninth chapter of Isaiah? For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father; the Prince of peace. From the first part of the passage we learn that Christ is the object of the prophecy, for the language confines us to this interpretation; and from the latter part we learn that there is no greater being in the universe; for there can be no greater than the mighty God. Is it proper to call him the mighty God, who is only a mighty creature of God? St. John in the beginning of his gospel, furnishes us with a passage equally decisive with this. He was directed to call Christ the Word; and having thus designated him he declares him to be God; and says, that all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. If Christ is to be considered as a creature, then he was made, and if he was made, either this representation is not to be depended on; or he made himself. The inspired writer repeats, and varies his affirmation, so as to guard against any misconception which the reader might form of his meaning. If we wish for farther evidence, that Christ is God we may derive it from those scriptures which ascribe all power, all knowledge, and all holiness, to him and which clothe him with authority to forgive sins, and to sit in judgment upon

all intelligent beings, deciding their characters, and settling their conditions forever.

We may say, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? But it may be recollected, that many do hear it patiently, and gladly, and have no other foundation, and wish for no other, upon which to rest their hopes of comfort here, and of happiness hereafter. If we were required to understand, what surpasses our comprehension, we might well complain of the unreasonableness of the requisition; but the case is far otherwise, when all we have to do is, to receive as a fact, what is supported by the testimony of God. If St. Paul was compelled to say, Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; we need not be afraid to admit for truth that which he admitted, should we be compelled to make the same declaration respecting it.

In considering the greatness of this salvation we are to bring into view, that it is salvation from sin, both as to its condemnation, and its reigning power. Salvation, in the least important acceptation of the term, that is deliverance or preservation, from great common, and temporal, evils, should not be overlooked, but should be seriously, and gratefully considered. Jeremiah was drawn out of the dungeon where he was sinking in the mire, and thus was preserved by the kind interference of Ebed Melech. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were brought safely out of the burning fiery furnace; and Daniel out of the lions' den. The people of Israel experienced a great deliverance when they were set free from the bondage of Egypt. It would take up too much time to notice the instances of wonderful providential interposition, in behalf of individuals, and nations. But these interpositions, many as they are, and great, are nothing compared with the salvation to which our attention is now called. Had the prophet received no help, his sufferings in the dungeon could not have been of long continuance, and therefore however severe, might have been patiently endured. The flames of the furnace of fire would soon have reduced to ashes the bodies of those who were subjected to their raging influence, had such a termination of this affair been permitted; and the lions, had not their mouths been stopped, would not have been long in

finishing their meal; so that the pangs of these victims, had their case been the most deplorable, could have been but momentary pangs. Egyptian bondage, hard as it was, was temporary, and as the rigor of it increased, the term of enduring it would have diminished, for the harder the labor, the shorter must have been the life of each one who had it to perform.

Now what is the case of the wicked? We may see by attending to their sentence, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. The soul is immortal, and it may be connected with a body that cannot cease to exist; so that the wicked shall die an endless death; or be destroyed with an everlasting destruction. The fire which never shall be quenched is a figure, which however inadequate, gives a dreadful idea of future misery; and the worm that never dies, represents a guilty conscience, whose stings grow continually sharper, and more tormenting. In vain is it to expect an end to the evil, for there is no end. Let the imagination extend as far as possible beyond time, and there will then be an eternity before it. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will it be with the pains of hell: Those who are least acquainted with the nature of sin are least apprehensive with respect to its consequences and most disposed from mere curiosity, to inquire, what hell can be, and from what sources its pains can proceed.

Whether hell is a material world or what it is, we are not sufficiently instructed to decide; but we can see in some measure, what it is which constitutes the misery of the wicked in hell. The miser has lost his bag of gold; the ambitious man has lost his titles, and his honors; the sensualist has lost his cups and his dishes; and all the means of gratification which to him are important: and so great and so universal is the change of condition, that society has lost its ties of interest, and of natural affection; and all the individuals hateful, and hating one another, stand separated by the enmity which burns like a fire within them. If mothers, in this world have eaten their own children; or dashed out their brains upon the rocks; or burned them in the fire; or drowned them in the rivers; would they

with the same enmity increased immensely in its exercise, should they meet them in hell, dandle them upon the knee; hug them to the bosom; and imprint kisses of tender affection upon their lips? Enmity may cause damage to those towards whom it is manifested; but it most distresses those who indulge it. Think then of the misery of that society in which no good member can be found, nor any good thing; at the head of which devils are, and whose whole employment shall be wickedness, in every possible way of practising it, attended too with remorse of conscience through interminable ages! Is it not a great thing to be saved from going down into such a dark and hopeless pit, where evils are endless, and continually multiplying?

Though we have been looking across the gulph, to see what is the wretched condition of those who have received their sentence of condemnation, we are not to forget, that sin produces the same effects in the present world, differing only in degree, that it produces in the eternal world. When it is said, that the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; no regard is had to their place, or circumstances, but to their state of mind. We must add therefore that salvation is deliverance, in part, from evils in this life, which are the natural fruit of sin. If wickedness causes in us such disquietude and confusion, as to render the agitation of the sea in a tempest, a suitable similitude, we are now in a condition of perishing necessity, and have begun to experience those torments which will be eternal, unless by the grace of God they are brought, in some measure, to an end on this side of the grave.

We have not taken into the account any evils, but such as proceed from sin, as its natural, and necessary effects. Though these evils are enormous, and overwhelming, yet since the wicked are spoken of as to be punished with an everlasting destruction, we may suppose there will be a positive punishment, dreadful in its nature, which God will himself inflict upon them. The wrath of God abides upon the unbelieving, and impenitent sinner. God, whose favor is life, and whose loving kindness is better than life, is angry with the wicked every day, and he is, and must be,

finishing their meal; so that the pangs of these victims, had their case been the most deplorable, could have been but momentary pangs. Egyptian bondage, hard as it was, was temporary, and as the rigor of it increased, the term of enduring it would have diminished, for the harder the labor, the shorter must have been the life of each one who had it to perform.

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to them, a consuming fire. How inexpressibly, and to us, at present, how inconceivably, dreadful, must it be to have him for an enemy, who can, and whose justice requires that he should, destroy, both the souls and the bodies, of his enemies, with an everlasting destruction; and how great must that salvation be, by means of which, the wall of separation made up of sins, is broken down, and the sinner reconciled, is brought nigh to God, so as to view him, and to find him, his father and his best friend!

To be saved from the woes of another and an eternal world, and to be delivered from those evils which are here consequent upon sin, may be considered as a part, but by no means, the whole of salvation. Nothing more positive and interesting, is said in the scriptures, respecting the torments of the wicked in another world, and their sufferings in this, than what we find respecting the happiness of the righteous, after death, and their enjoyments on this side of the grave. Present circumstances make our conceptions so gross, that no language in which heavenly things might be literally described, would be intelligible to us. St. Paul tells us that he was caught up to the third heaven; which he calls paradise; that is, he says he knew a man who was thus translated; and that man must have been himself, but, instead of giving an account, as he would have done of things which he had witnessed in this world, he only informs us, that he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. He was doubly barred from making any communication. The law or prohibition of God, was in his way, and he found no language in use among men, into which he could translate the language which he had heard used in the paradise above.

Those heathen writers, who have displayed all the beauty of style, and all the ingenuity of unassisted reason, in representing the condition of departed spirits, have, in their exhibition of hell, given us nothing essentially different from a picture of a common prison of correction; and in their exhibition of heaven, nothing essentially different from a picture of a place favorable to sensual gratification. How much more satisfactory is that negative account which St. Paul gives us of heaven, quoting it in substance, from

Isaiah, Eye hath not seen; nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him! Not only does the sum total of good which God has in store for his children, far exceed whatever was or could be, realized in this world, but the inheritance of the saints in light, is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. It must therefore be something with which the common inlets of nature can never make us acquainted.

From what we know of heaven, however imperfect our knowledge, we may see, in some measure, how important it is to have an establishment there; how much they gain by dying, who die in the Lord. The body which the saints have in this world is the common body of humanity; and the best that they can say of it is, to call it the earthly house of this tabernacle; and their heart is so defiled with sin, that the more they are acquainted with themselves, the more inclined will they be to think, and pronounce themselves, the chief of sinners. A thorough change therefore is necessary, and will in due time be effected, for flesh and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption.

To the glorified body of Christ, as it appeared upon the mount of transfiguration, it is probable, that the bodies of his people, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, will bear a strong resemblance. Free from the weakness of infancy, and the infirmities of age; and the pains of sickness, they will be clothed in beauty, surpassing immeasurably, that of our first parents before the fall.

The intellectual powers will likewise assume new vigor; the mind will expand with knowledge; and the heart with holiness. The vision will not then be dim, as through a glass, but clear, as when we see face to face.

All who have been sensible of the burdens of a mortal body, must consider a body immortal as a great blessing; and all who have felt like David when he said, Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; must consider an entire renovation of the soul, as necessarily connected with happiness.

The advantage gained by those who are received into heaven, in regard to the state of society, is an important circumstance connected with their condition. While David was here he had occasion to cry out, *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech; that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!* Whether David did actually ever sojourn among the wild and savage Arabs or not, he lived in a world lying in wickedness, and was much molested by wicked men. In the description which we have of the New Jerusalem, or heaven, in the Revelation of St. John, it is said, *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* John the Baptist inculcated the same sentiment, when speaking of Christ whose forerunner he himself was, he said among other things, *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* We are every where taught to expect a separation between the righteous and the wicked, which will be complete, and final, as the gold and dross which have been united in one mass, are separated by the powerful operation of the heat of the furnace. It is a glorious rest which the weary will enjoy in that world, where the wicked cease from troubling. How totally unutterable must be the blissful feelings of those to whom the following apostolic address is applicable in its most extensive and literal sense, *But ye are come unto Mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God; the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and church of the first born which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

In a world of such consummate holiness as heaven, we might conclude, had we no information upon the subject, that holiness must constitute the whole employment, for nothing else would comport with the propensities of those beings who make up the society. God, who is love, sheds abroad his love, as the sun does his beams. Angels, those

ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, are filled with love to God, and to the godly; and the spirits of just men made perfect, being altogether freed from the curse of the apostacy, and having no longer any occasion to eat their bread in the sweat of their face, have nothing to do but to serve God, directly, with faculties adapted in the best manner to the purpose. Accordingly, they rest not, day and night; but keeping in view the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with the mystery of their distinction, and of their union; they cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which, was, and is, and is to come; and their new, and glad, and gladdening song, is, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings, and priests, unto God, and the Father; to him be glory, and dominion, forever, and ever, Amen!

Heavenly happiness is salvation finished; if that may be said to be finished, which is always increasing. Since however salvation is begun in the present world, we ought not to overlook those joys which they have in the present world, who are the subjects of it.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. Faith is the substance of things hoped for; and the evidence of things not seen. The enjoyment which prophets and apostles had, and which ever attends the people of God, when they put their trust in him, no earthly consideration can balance. Where there is submission of mind, the indulgences of providence are received with gratitude; and the frowns of providence serve to excite sober, and comfortable considerations; so that though there is a difference in conditions, no one is complained of, for each one brings its own good with it. But one thing is needful. Possessed of this, we might sit quietly in the stocks, and sing a song of praise at midnight; and destitute of this, we might find ourselves uneasy on a throne, and be as dissatisfied with a crown, and a scepter, as we should be with the rattles of a child. Alterations might be made in our outward circumstances, as often as fashion would make them in our clothes, without any beneficial result; while an alteration in the views of the mind, and in the feelings of the heart, such as is by grace effected, when the rebel is turned into a

good subject, is a never failing foundation of contentment and rejoicing.

If we reject the counsel of God therefore we reject it against ourselves altogether, gaining nothing, even now, but losing every thing; for though we read of the pleasures of sin which are for a season, these are rather nominal than real, as all could testify for whom this question was intended, What profit had ye then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death.

This salvation is great because it is free, and offered to all who think it of consequence enough to receive it. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If it is worthy of all acceptation, all might accept of it. Good things of a common kind, might be proposed to the needy, and yet not in sufficient quantity to supply the necessities of all. No store house which can be exhausted, however ample, and well filled, not even Joseph's granaries which supported the people through a long and extensive famine, can represent the abundance of salvation. God by his prophet Isaiah proclaims, Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye; yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price! Again, as the same prophet records his words, he says, Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else! The beloved disciple John, in the last chapter of his book of Revelations presents the same subject to us in the same encouraging manner. And the Spirit, and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.

To show the greatness of this salvation, let it suffice for the present, to add this consideration, that the benefits of it will be realized by a multitude too great to be numbered. Notwithstanding the prevalence of sin through all the ages of time hitherto, and notwithstanding its dreadful and wide spread existence even now, God has never been without a seed to serve him, and in future, nations shall be born in a day and holiness to the Lord shall be inscribed upon the bells of the horses, throughout the whole earth. It is said

in the account which we have of God's promise to Abraham. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be. The spiritual seed of Abraham will probably, far out number his natural posterity; and to his spiritual seed we may look for the accomplishment of this promise. The influence which the salvation of sinners, in this world, will have upon the inhabitants of other worlds, to unfold to them the manifold wisdom of God, is spoken of in the scriptures, and ought to be noticed by us.

We have now taken an imperfect view of this great salvation; and it comes next in order to consider what it is to neglect it.

All the knowledge which we can have respecting salvation we must derive from the sacred scriptures. These are a fund of information which God has graciously granted us, and a fund abundantly sufficient to answer every valuable purpose. If we neglect the scriptures, we certainly neglect the salvation which they contain. Other things are interesting, only in a subordinate degree; and yet we are naturally disposed to give to other things the largest share of attention. Those who have the Bible in their houses, in many instances have so little of it in their minds, that when they undertake to make quotations from it, they expose their ignorance, and quote what is no where to be found.

No less do they neglect this great salvation who spend much time in turning over the pages of the bible, having nothing better in view than to supply themselves with objections against it, by making one part contradict another. Instead of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, to get the meaning of the whole, by making out a real agreement where there is some apparent discordance, such persons take a course directly the reverse, for The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble. If we read the bible with a disposition hostile to its truth, it will be easy for us to conclude, that we discover very different things in relation to the same subject, and of course that the whole must be inconsistency and falsehood.

Two apostles, St. Paul, and St. James, have brought into view the case of Abraham; and with respect to his justification, have maintained, one, that it was by faith, and the other, that it was by works. Here is an opportunity favorable to a caviller, to find fault, though nothing can be clearer than, that the faith of Abraham, would have been a vain thing without his works; and his works equally vain without his faith. Another case which presents a seeming disagreement, but which is really and beautifully, harmonious in its parts, is furnished by the words of our Savior himself. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. For our ability to come to Christ, we are undoubtedly indebted to God, whose work it is to renew the heart; but we are still altogether without excuse since the only reason that we do not come is, that we will not. It is easy to be seen, that salvation is not the thing sought after by those, who instead of endeavoring to reconcile one passage of scripture with another, lay hold of every circumstance to establish a disagreement.

There are others who make the Bible their study, and are much conversant with the letter of it, prompted by the ambition of a proud heart, to possess, that they may display an uncommon stock of knowledge. Among the Jews in ancient times, this was generally, the manner in which the Bible was studied. Upon their broad phylacteries, they made copious inscriptions, and were as industrious in committing scripture passages to memory, as the most forward children are now, in a Sabbath school. But what did they know of salvation, or what did they appear to care about it? Those who sat in Moses' seat, to expound the law, expounded away the meaning of it, and made the traditions of men of higher authority than the commandments of God. All their sacrifices were typical of a Savior; and their prophecies pointed directly to Christ, and in him had an exact fulfilment. But how blinded were the people at large, especially those who called themselves the wisest among them, and how far were they from recognising the Messiah when he appeared, because their expectations were directed to a mere temporal deliverer, and the

honors and emoluments of an earthly kingdom. Ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own; and the character of their own righteousness appears in this, that they devoured widows houses, and for a pretence made long prayers.

To us as well as to the Jews, these words of our Savior are applicable, and infinitely important. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. If we do not search the scriptures; and if Christ be not our great object in searching them, we are chargeable with neglecting this great salvation.

As we cannot read to any purpose, if we omit the duty of prayer, so we evidently neglect salvation, if we neglect to pray to God to teach us what it is. The following words of Christ are words of weight, and let them be so weighty upon us, as to divest us of all our self-sufficiency. At that time Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes! Those who are wise, and prudent, in their own estimation, could they even repeat the whole of the Bible, from the first chapter to the last, would only repeat a lesson of prodigious length, in an unknown tongue, having no understanding of its real meaning. Those who are not taught of God, are not taught effectually; and can any be effectually taught, and yet live a prayerless life? The injunction to pray, in secret, is so plain, and positive, and the advantage is so great, and obvious, that it cannot be a matter of uncertainty whether we neglect salvation, if we do not keep up a secret intercourse with God. What shall we say respecting family worship? Do we call for a positive precept, when we feel the urgency of our case, and have that anxiety which the jailor had; or that devotion which Cornelius had? In seasons when religion excites the attention of a people, do we not find attentive heads of families, laying aside their excuses, and availing themselves of the privileges of their own family altars? Whether every christian, at the head of his family does lead his family in the acts of devotion or not, there can be no doubt, that sal-

vation is, at least in a great degree, neglected where this is not the case.

When God rested from his work of creation, the sabbath was appointed, and it will not be dispensed with, until day and night, shall be no more. As long as there shall be such a day, there will be an obligation upon those who are acquainted with its appointment, not only to spend it in religious duties, but to form themselves into public and solemn assemblies for this purpose. All who stay away from public worship, pleading, that with their means, they can be better edified at home, would do well to take into consideration what God said to Israel upon this subject. Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest. But in the place which the Lord shall choose, in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

Though we should be together upon the sabbath, in some place where God has recorded his name, we may be together, and yet be very far from the duty which we are required to perform. Many, as if they considered the rest of the sabbath to be the rest of the body, habitually indulge themselves in sleep; and what they hear, is like the confusion of a dream, of which they can give no regular account, and of which they themselves can have no clear and profitable conception. Many have as many objects of attention as there are persons within their sight; or as there are articles of dress to be seen upon those persons. That in such cases the eye is more occupied than the ear, no one can doubt, who credits the report which such persons make of what they have witnessed upon the sabbath. Some attend upon public worship as they attend upon the theatre, to look at the actor, and to criticise his performance; and that to them, is a good sermon which they judge to be a good composition; and that, to them, is a good preacher, who in their estimation, is a good speaker. Jacob has expressed the feelings which every one ought to have upon the sabbath, and in the place of God's worship. How dreadful is this place; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven! In proportion as we fail to have sim-

ilar impressions upon our own minds, upon the sabbath, we profane the sabbath, and of course we live in the neglect of salvation. One thing farther is to be mentioned under this head of the discourse.

We neglect this great salvation, whatever we may do, if we be not possessed of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. We neglect this salvation if we do not secure it to ourselves; and we cannot secure it, except by being joined to the Lord by a new creation of our souls. Our Saviour, in what he said to Nicodemus, is abundantly explicit with respect to this matter. Though there are constitutional differences among men; and though there are degrees in holiness, and degrees in sin; the whole human race is made up of but two classes, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

Having taken into consideration this great salvation, and what it is to neglect it, we now come to the question. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? This is a subject, generally, but little thought of, but as there are many devices in a man's heart, every sinner, perhaps, has some method of escape, upon which he places his dependance. Some undervalue that salvation which is by grace, and expect the happiness of heaven as the reward of their good works. But how can any one be satisfied with such a scheme as this, unless he can prove that the gospel is a forgery; and that Christ did not die for the ungodly. Before we can rest safely upon works as a foundation, we must be satisfied, that works are the foundation which God himself has laid. As an irresistible Sovereign it must be expected that he will govern the affairs of his own kingdom in his own way.

Those whose hope is their works ought to inquire farther, how many precepts they allow the law to contain; and which will exceed upon a comparison, their acts of obedience or their transgressions? In the settlement of an account, though we should find much credited, there might be so much more charged against us; as to require a surrendry of all our possessions, and even of our persons.

Would any creditor think himself in equity bound to discharge a debtor, because he had made payment in part? Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? Admitting the common principle by which men govern their intercourse one with another, the demands of the law must be satisfied. But it is not stating the worst of the case to say, that the transgressions of every man outnumber his acts of obedience. To this it must be added that every one who supposes he has obeyed the law perfectly, or sufficiently to answer the purpose, will find in the end, that he has not obeyed it all, and, that he has ever been ignorant of its broad extent, and of its spiritual character. As he would be wretchedly disappointed, who in attempting to cancel an obligation, should discover all his means to consist of counterfeit coin; so the sinner will be silenced, and covered with shame, and confusion, when in the light of eternity, he shall see, his works of righteousness, upon which his whole dependance is placed, to be but dead works; his very virtues vices. This will assuredly be, the case for God is a spirit, and lays his claim so directly on the heart of man, that he allows nothing to be service rendered to him, which does not originate in the heart.

Some quiet themselves, or attempt to, with the expectation, that the mercy of God will be exercised in so unqualified a manner, that all will be saved; and of course that they shall. To maintain such an opinion it is necessary however, to make a sacrifice of large portions of the scriptures; for nothing is asserted in language more positive, and solemn than the eternal torments of the wicked. If the righteous have any thing to found their hope upon, that they shall never perish; the wicked have the same to found their fear upon, that they shall never see life, for exactly the same terms are used to express the duration of happiness, and of misery.

It is a question too of no small importance to be decided whether the justice of God will admit of the salvation of all men, for nothing can take place under his government, which is unjust, any more than any thing can, which is unmerciful. This must be alike obvious to persons of all religious persuasions. But what favorable conclusion can we draw up

respecting the future happiness of all mankind, from the appearance of things in the present world? In what condition is this world? Is not the devil represented as the god of it, and does not the conduct of men prove that the representation is a just one? Why can not men be satisfied to butcher those animals that were designed for their use, without butchering one another likewise? Why are laws necessary to regulate society; and why are prisons, dungeons, and gibbets, necessary to give a sanction to laws, and to enforce the observance of them? Why is strife so common, and why does corrupt nature show itself so frequently, and so dreadfully, in the feuds, and bickerings, even of those who profess to love the Lord supremely; and to love one another with a pure heart fervently.

If any mass of population were to be removed from one extreme of this land, or of this world, to the opposite extreme, would the change of place produce such an internal change, that those persons who had been apart, would come together, as kindred drops, by mutual attraction unite, and form one body of water? If such a thing never did take place, and never was expected, upon what principles, of reason, and analogy, do we conclude, that those animosities which hinder the peace of this world, would not hinder the peace of any other world; and that those will live hereafter as brethren, who live here as enemies? If we will lay aside railing, and content ourselves with reasoning, we must admit, that what Christ told Nicodemus to be necessary, is actually necessary to every one who enters into the kingdom of heaven.

Now if it can be proved, that a change will take place in the wicked after death, equivalent to a new creation of their nature, it may be proved, that they will be happy, for this is all that is essential to make them happy. But who is there sufficiently inconsistent to undertake the proof of such a case as this, or even to avow his belief of its possibility? If more is brought about, without means, in another world, than is affected, by the use of means, in this world, then why are not means worse than useless here, and why is not all the expense lost, and all the labor, of sending the gospel to the destitute?

Perhaps however it may be thought, that the fire of hell will separate sin from the sinner, as the fire of the furnace separates the dross from the gold. But what is there in the sinner that can be compared to gold? Is not the whole dross; and can the most intense heat of the furnace so act upon dross, as to make it any thing but dross? Laying aside figures, and using plain language, if the sufferings of hell have a reforming, and new creating, influence, why are not the wicked here reformed, in practice; and made holy in heart, by the sufferings which they endure, of various kinds, and in various degrees of severity? Let us bring the subject where we can see it in the light of reason and revelation.

Another class is made up of those persons who are not anxious about this great salvation nor about their neglect of it, because they conclude that man, however he may differ from animals, in other things, resembles them in this, that he will cease to exist when his connection with this world ceases. This conclusion, irrational, and absurd, as it is, accounts for all those instances of suicide, which cannot be accounted for from distraction. The arch apostate though not a wise, and safe, counsellor, is yet a powerful, and persuasive one; and has won over, many a time, a Judas, or an Ahithophel, to engage in the work of self execution. But with what indescribable horrors must he be surrounded, who throws himself into eternity, and into the immediate presence of God, having expected nothing from his own murder but such a state of insensibility as would free him from a load of evils which he had not fortitude, and patience, to endure! The disappointment must be awful and overwhelming!

As others have resorted to this expedient who might be as unlikely as some of us to adopt it, let us be upon our guard, lest the practice of sin induce us to receive for truth the most palpable and pernicious falsehood.

If we have any word of God we may learn from it the souls immortality and if we can see any thing in the light of reason we can see that man was made in vain, and far worse than in vain, if made only for this world, for his excessive, and ever busy mind furnishes him with much disquietude, while the ox, that knows his owner, and the ass,

his master's crib, perform their daily task, without any painful reflections, or anticipations, and lie down at night satisfied with being filled. That we should be placed over the brutes, and subject them to our will, and yet be, upon the whole, in a condition far less desirable than theirs, is such an incongruity, that nothing but that stupefaction which is the effect of sin, can account for its being admitted.

The three things which have been considered appear to include all which can be said by those who expect to escape, while they neglect this great salvation. But what can we find in these things that will warrant us to put our all at hazard? The question of our text my friends has nothing to do with cunningly devised fables, but is of vast practical importance.

This church probably embraces about one-seventh part of the people. Let us say there may be as many christians out of the church, as there are false professors in it. Taking their estimate, and remembering, that for the present, all may be viewed as neglecting this great salvation, who have not heartily embraced it, the result will be, that six-sevenths of this people, with all the privileges which christianity can afford them, are in a most precarious and perilous situation. Do we think of this when we lay ourselves down upon our beds to sleep, uncertain whether we shall awake, until the heavens be no more! Do we think of this, when we put on our clothes, not knowing whether we shall ever put them off, or whether some friend will have to strip our lifeless bodies! Do we think of this when instead of seeking the favor of God, we pursue the lying vanities of life as the child chases the butterfly or thinks to overtake the rain-bow.

SERMON II.

UPON THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW xxii, 42.

What think ye of Christ; whose son is he.

THE Jews had the scriptures of the Old Testament; and the scribes, and pharisees, were the public teachers of religion. Very incorrect ideas had these teachers of the subject which they undertook to explain; as may be seen by all competent judges. When one question leads to another, and when there is an intimate connection between the two, he is not prepared to answer the first, who has no reply to make to the second.

Were not the question contained in the text an important one, though many seem to think it immaterial how they reply to it, Christ would not have proposed it to the pharisees; and had their answer been pertinent, and sufficient; he would not have proposed his second question, to which they could find nothing to say.

Having all the information with regard to this matter which the pharisees possessed and much in addition, it becomes us to improve from their error, that we may be prepared to meet the difficulty which, to them was insurmountable, and which put them to silence. The scriptures must be our guide, and while we follow them depending upon their divine Author to discover to us the truth, we shall not be in danger of going astray.

Though many entertain the opinion of the pharisees, and of the Jews, generally, that Christ was merely a man, nothing in the scriptures is plainer than, that he had an exist-

ence before he appeared in this world; and the pharisees were puzzled, and put to shame, by having a single passage brought up to them, in which David in his days spoke of Christ, and called him his Lord. St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, and referring them to the misconduct of the Israelites in the wilderness, and to the judgments which they procured for themselves, says, Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. The affair alluded to by the Apostle, took place more than fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. How then could the Israelites tempt him, unless he had an existence antecedently to his appearing in the manger at Bethlehem? Were it recorded that the same people, at the same time persecuted, and put to death the apostles, the absurdity, and falsehood, of the record, would be very apparent, for every one can see, that the apostles could not be persecuted, and put to death before they were born.

Christ is undoubtedly the angel of the Lord who in former times communicated with many of whom we have an account, for he used language which would have been very unbecoming for any created angel; language suitable, only upon the supposition, that he who was sent, was equal to him that sent him. A passage in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis evidently relates to Jesus Christ. On his return from Padan Aram to the land of his nativity, Jacob, being alone, was met at a place which he called Peniel, by one in the form of a man, who wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. He who is here spoken of as a man, is likewise described as God; and Jacob, sensible that he was God, importunately craved his blessing and obtained it. But no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him. Hosea, referring to this appearance of God in the form of a man, says, Jacob had power over the angel, and prevailed. We can have no doubt who it was that appeared to Jacob, if we credit what is written of him. In various other passages Christ is spoken of as the angel of the Lord, for no one beside can be intended.

The one whom Nebuchadnezzar saw in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, in company with the three persons cast by his order into that dreadful place, with the intention of destroying them, whatever might be his ideas of him, must have been Jesus Christ, since he describes him as like to the Son of God. What we find in the writings of several of the prophets, is to be referred to the same glorious person who manifested himself to them to instruct and direct them in their business. St. John informs us, that the Word was in the beginning; and by saying that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, he puts it beyond all dispute, that what he says of the Word, is to be understood of Christ. When Christ declared, I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father; it was so evident to his disciples, that he spoke of an existence which he had before he was born of Mary, that they said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb, by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. We are told, that Christ took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and we have abundant proof, upon the very face of the passage in which we get the information, that he had a being before he was thus manifested. If Christ was ever rich, and became poor, and we are assured of this change in his condition, he must have been rich in some other world, for here he was poor from his birth to his death.

Those persons who are disposed to answer the question in the text as the pharisees answered it, ought to consider what fair construction they can put upon the many passages of the scriptures which relate to this point. Ingenious attempts have been made to set aside the obvious meaning of those scriptures which militate against the simple humanity of Christ; but such attempts serve only to show what influence the heart can have over the understanding.

If it is of consequence to know whether Christ existed before he was seen in our world, it is of no less consequence to be made acquainted with the character which he sustained while here; and whether those attributes which belong to God were possessed by him. Omnipresence is

unquestionably an attribute which distinguishes God from all his creatures of every rank, for no creature can be every where, nor in more than one place, at one time. The angel Gabriel was not present with Daniel when he began his prayer; but was caused to leave his place in heaven, and fly swiftly, that he might communicate to him the message which he had to deliver. But from the mouth of Christ himself we learn that he is present in all places. Let us attend to some of his declarations. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven. It appears from this language, that while he was on earth, he was also in heaven. In addressing his disciples he said, For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. There may be a vast number of such little collections in the world, and here is an assurance that Christ is present with them all. When our Lord, having given directions to his apostles, was about to depart from them, he said for their consolation, and for the consolation of all who should succeed them, with right views, in the work of the ministry; Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

No one but God can have a knowledge of all things, for he says, I the Lord search the heart. But we find Christ possessed of this knowledge. He did not commit himself to the Jews, when in consequence of his miracles, many believed in his name, because he knew all men, And needed not, that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man. Simon Peter, when the question was put to him the third time by his master, whom he had three times denied, Lovest thou me, answered, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. No terms can be found stronger than those here used, to describe omniscience. Here is the substance of a syllogism, without the form. Considering the knowledge of Christ as extending to every thing, however great or small. Peter inferred, with certainty, that he must be thoroughly acquainted with his particular case. In the conversation which Christ had with men of various descriptions while he was here upon earth, he adapted his questions and an-

swers, in many instances, not so much to what others said to him, as to the thoughts which they attempted to conceal. When complying with the invitation of Simon the pharisee, he partook of an entertainment in his house, he appears to have been treated with all external courtesy and respect, and he stated the case of the two debtors, who owed, the one five hundred pence, and the other fifty, not because of any thing which Simon had said against him, or against the woman, who manifested her humility, affection and gratitude, in so extraordinary a way, but because he spoke within himself what he chose not to utter, or indulged thoughts wicked, and derogatory, to the penitent woman, and to the gracious Lord to whom she was endeavoring to do honor. The reply which Christ made to Nicodemus seems to have but little, if any connection, with the address of the Jewish ruler to him; but it accords exactly to the state of his mind, and respects a subject of infinite importance, concerning which he had at that time no ideas. Does it not appear that Christ as distinctly understood the views of Nicodemus, and the foundation upon which he rested his hope, as he did the terms which he employed in his conversation with him? Since Christ is to be the judge of the quick and the dead; since all mankind, of every age, and condition, as well as the angels, will receive from him a righteous sentence, his knowledge must be perfect, as to every character and thing; for the least deficiency would entirely disqualify him for this business.

One passage of scripture has been cited and urged to support an opinion against his omniscience. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son; but the Father. If the omniscience of Christ is asserted in other passages of scripture, it cannot be that it is denied in this passage; and there must be some way of reconciling what is here said with what is said in other passages; whether we can point out the way or not. The names of very respectable expositors might be mentioned, whose opinion is, that in this place Christ is speaking of his human nature, and, that we are to understand him as declaring that as a man, he did not know the precise time when the things of which he

had been speaking should be accomplished. But to this interpretation it is objected, that it would make the answer of Christ to his disciples quite equivocal, and of course altogether unworthy of him. It will be remembered however, that when he and the disciples who are spoken of, arrived at Emmaus, it is said, he made as though he would have gone farther; and it will be remembered also, that John answered negatively to those who inquired of him whether he was Elias, though he certainly was the person promised as the forerunner of Christ under the name of that prophet.

But if we adopt an opinion for which we may plead the human authority inferior perhaps to none, the difficulty attending this passage vanishes at once. As the Son is mentioned between the angels and the Father, it is thought that what is said of him could not apply to him as the Son of man, because as a mere man, he must be inferior to the angels, and therefore would not have been mentioned after them, but must regard him as the Son of the Father; as in his divine nature. Accordingly, the meaning is, not that the Son himself, did not know the day, and hour, in which the events described would take place, but, that it did not belong to him to make known to others more upon the subject than might be gathered from the circumstances. That this opinion puts no strain upon the passage is evident from this, that the same Greek word is used in this place, that St. Paul uses where he says to the Corinthians, I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Every one is sensible, that the Apostle could not divest himself of the knowledge which he had upon subjects in general, and that his intention was only, that he should confine his preaching to what he considered to be of principal importance, Christ and the atonement made for sin by his death.

Whether therefore, we think with some persons that Christ was discoursing with his disciples only concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, or with others, that he connected the solemn scenes of the last judgment, with the typical scenes of Jerusalem's ruin, it is quite consistent with other declarations for him to say, that no man, nor

angel, nor even he himself, knew, that it was commissioned to make known, the time with so much particularity as to name the day, and hour.

Almighty power is clearly an attribute of God, and possessed, and exercised by Christ. The cure of diseases; the stilling of the winds; the casting out of devils; the feeding of multitudes upon the food created for the purpose; and the raising of the dead; are miracles, for the performance of which, no limited ability is sufficient, such miracles, we know, are recorded among the things which make up the history of the life of Christ. If the miracles of Moses compelled the magicians of Egypt to cry out, This is the finger of God, must we not be more stupid, and hard of heart, than these idolatrous jugglers, if we are not sensible of the finger of God in the miracles of Christ?

Divine power is visible in the miracles of Moses as well as in those of Christ; and therefore, we cannot argue, that Christ had Almighty power, merely, from this, that he wrought miracles, but when the circumstances are taken into consideration, particularly the manner in which they were wrought, the case appears to be clear. But whether any power exists in the universe which is not possessed by Christ, cannot be doubted by any one who believes, that he created all things, and, that by him all things consist. All the manifestations of power which are possible, are surely to be seen in creation, and preservation.

Immutability is an attribute of God. He says by Malachi, I am the Lord; I change not. But is not Jesus Christ said to be, The same, yesterday, to-day and forever? Of course he has an unchangeable nature, though as a man, he increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man. Creatures of every rank, change, in a variety of ways, and must be every moment changing, while to God alone it belongs to continue the same.

It must be clear to every one that the rewards of the righteous will be bestowed upon them by God, and with reference to the service which he will condescend to own as rendered to himself. This was undoubtedly very clear to St. Paul, and he did not mean to contradict it when he wrote to the Colossians, Of the Lord ye shall receive the

reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. The reward of the inheritance is all that the righteous can expect; and as this reward stands here connected with the service of Christ, this service must be the work of faith and the labor of love, or the whole business of the christian life. If the Apostle's declaration means any thing, it means every thing in relation to this point.

It is the prerogative of God to forgive sins; and we know that the Jews were exasperated at Jesus Christ for claiming, and exercising this right. This was what the scribes said in their hearts, when Christ healed one sick of the palsy. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemy; who can forgive sins but God only?

Though by worship is sometimes to be understood nothing more than a manifestation of great respect, it can hardly be thought that this is all which is intended, in every instance in which it is said, Christ was worshipped. When he appeared in ancient times as the angel of the Lord, he was worshipped in the sacrifices which were offered to him. No one can doubt whether he ought to be worshipped who attends to what took place in the particular instances of Gideon and Manoah; or who attends to the several accounts which we have in the gospel history, and in other parts of the scriptures.

But some persons; and some very respectable too for general information, undertake to assert that Jesus Christ twice forbade John to worship him, when he appeared to him in the Isle of Patmos. The matter deserves attention, and requires all the light, that can be thrown upon it. No one will deny, that the angel spoken of in the nineteenth and twenty-second chapters, of the book of Revelations, said to John, when he fell at his feet to worship him, See thou do it not. Prove this angel to be Jesus Christ, and you prove Jesus Christ not to be the proper object of worship. But how does this matter appear, when all things relating to it are taken into consideration? All the angels of God are commanded to worship the First begotten, who is Jesus Christ. When we are told that nothing more is intended by this passage than, that all the prophets are required to pay respect to this greater prophet, we feel sorry,

that a person undertaking to say any thing by way of interpretation, should be able to say nothing more to the purpose. If an angel means a messenger, and of course, may mean a prophet, surely the expression, all the angels, must include those invisible messengers whose residence has always been in heaven.

If any one is at a loss to determine whether Jesus Christ is worthy of worship, let him attend to the testimony of St. Stephen; or let him hear what the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands say, in regard to this matter, in the fifth chapter of the Revelations.

Since a created angel is spoken of, in more than one place in this book, as interpreting things to St. John, it is but reasonable to conclude, that it was before such an angel that the Apostle, transported by the scenes exhibited to him, and not knowing what he did, as had been the case before with him, when he was sore afraid upon the mount of transfiguration, fell down in an attitude of worship. It is acknowledged that no formal notice is given of the appearance of Jesus Christ after the angel refuses to be worshipped; and from this circumstance some have concluded Jesus Christ and the angel to be the same; but this conclusion is inadmissible, for instead of reconciling scripture with scripture, it produces a contradiction, very apparent, and goes to the destruction of the whole.

Whoever has carefully read the book of Psalms must be sensible, that the Redeemer speaks in many instances, and the inspired writers also in the same Psalm, while we are left to determine what was said by the one, and what by the other, without any thing to guide us more than we have in this case in the Revelations. Let the fortieth psalm be examined, and it will be found that though much of it is applicable to David, some of it belongs to David's Lord, and is quoted and applied to him by St. Paul in his tenth chapter to the Hebrews. There is no more reason to think that the angel who speaks in the ninth verse of the last chapter of the Revelations, speaks also in the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the same chapter, than there is to think, that he who says in the sixteenth psalm, Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see

corruption, says the other things which stand in connection with this declaration. That worship therefore which is rendered to any one but God, would be idolatry, is rendered to Christ, and thus it is made evident, that it belongs to him.

Independence distinguishes God from all other beings. This attribute however, can not be claimed in stronger terms than those which are used by Jesus Christ concerning himself. He denied that any man, or any one, as it is in the original, took his life from him, and asserted his own power to lay it down, and to take it up again. When he wrought miracles he invoked no higher being; he made mention of no higher authority; but expressed his will, and that was enough, to cure diseases, and to raise the dead.

There are however persons who acknowledge, that Christ existed before the world was, and that he possessed every divine attribute, who yet deny his deity, and maintain, that he acted only by delegation. But such an opinion seems to have nothing to support it. If we admit this opinion, we must maintain, that the incarnation of Christ was not his state of humiliation, though it is so represented in the scriptures; but, that great glory was put upon him when he appeared here in the flesh. God, it may be added, declares, that he will not give his glory to another. We can think of no glory belonging to God, which is not ascribed to Christ. If this is not the glory of Christ himself, has not God given his glory to another, contrary to his own declaration, made, and repeated? If we suppose Christ to be God as well as man, our way is clear of difficulties; but upon any other supposition, the scriptures abound in language which we cannot understand. To positive declarations, to be found in the word of God we may add, that so far as we are capable of judging, it is utterly impossible for infinite attributes to be communicated, or to be possessed by two beings, strictly, and altogether distinct. Among all opinions can there be one attended with more difficulties than this, that a creature dependant for his very existence, with all that appertains to him, can be made independent, as he must be to whom no limits can be set, over whom no control can be exercised? Those who oppose the doctrine of three persons in one God offer as their reason that they believe in one God,

and, that this doctrine makes three Gods. But have those persons duly considered their own scheme, and attended to the consequences of it? If every thing essential to God is found in Christ, is he not God; and if he be distinct in nature, is he not another God; and if so, must there not be two Gods? The absurdity of the opinion which admits two Gods, is equally great with one which would actually admit three. That there is but one God we all maintain. The mode of his existence is the thing in dispute. There would be a palpable contradiction in supposing God to be three in the same sense that he is one; and one in the same sense that he is three. But it would be very arrogant in us, who are ignorant of most things which occur daily, and to whom the little words why, and wherefore, convey so much that is puzzling, and perplexing, to decide, that there can be no way in which God can be both one and three. If it is a matter of revelation we are bound to receive it as we find it represented, and if there is an inward witness which determines the minds of the people of God, we ought to consider, that other testimony, however various, and strong, will leave us in a state of indecision, unless we have this witness; and of course, we should seek to be qualified to judge, before we undertake to form a judgment.

In making up an opinion of Christ we are led to attend to the purpose which he had in view in coming into the world. Some persons have thought, that nothing else was aimed at by the coming of Christ but to set the things of duty, and of a future state more clearly before mankind; and to add to his doctrines, and precepts the weight of his own perfect example. Upon this supposition all which we need is information, the disposition being invariably to follow the path of rectitude when it is marked out for us. But though we ought never to lose sight of the instructions, and the example, of Christ, we pass over the principal thing, if we do not attend to his death. There are those who profess to believe in the atonement, to whom the death of Christ seems to be no substitution for the punishment of the sinner; at least for his final rejection, because in the view of such persons, some portion of virtue is still attached to human nature. Yet surveying man as he appears, and acts him-

self out in this world, can we deny that he is a transgressor from the womb, in opposition to his fellow men, and opposed to his own best interest; sunk in sin; and hastening to sink in misery? The law which we have broken has death for its penalty. How shall the transgressors live, if the justice of God be made manifest, unless some one appear for him as a substitute, able to sustain that curse, which coming on the transgressor would be to him, complete perdition? Looking to the highest order of creatures, can we find one in whom we could have confidence; one concerning whom we could say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.

The ceremonial law is wholly without meaning, and useless, except as it refers to the guilty, and polluted state of man; and to the atoning sacrifice, and cleansing blood of a Savior. Let the grand object, the death of Christ be out of sight, and you can give no reason for the many costly offerings, required of the Jews; nor for their many ablutions. Very minutely circumstantial was the worship of the Jewish church; and the gospel history explains the typical ceremonies. The prophecies respecting Christ, point directly to his death, and assign the ruined state of the moral world as the reason for it. When John Baptist called the attention of his disciples to Christ, he said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Christ repeatedly made mention of his own death, that he might correct the mistakes generally entertained about him, and lead those who were looking for dignities in an earthly kingdom, to aspire after that crown of righteousness which he was to purchase with his blood. Among his declarations to this point we find him saying, And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Lest the meaning of Christ should be misapprehended the sacred historian was directed to add, this he said signifying what death he should die. The New Testament throughout, and the Old likewise, abounds in the sentiment, that Christ died for the salvation of his people, and, that his death is the only foundation of hope and happiness.

To omit many things which might be said upon the question in our text, let the concluding remark be at this time, that Christ is precious to every true believer, and, that, that love to him which is implanted in the renewed heart is much stronger than even maternal affection. Of this there can be no doubt, for his disciples are required to love him with such an affection that in a comparative view, they may be said to hate their nearest relatives and friends. That love of Christ which has not a constraining influence, is love only in name; those cords which do not bind the soul to him who gave it being at first; and who as the quickening spirit, gives new life to dead sinners are not the cords which in Christ's house connect the members with the head. A christian's feelings upon the subject, are well expressed in the language of a christian poet:

I'll carve his name upon the bark;
And every wounded tree,
Shall bleed, and bear some mystic mark,
That Jesus bled for me.

SERMON III.

IN THEIR PREACHING, MINISTERS ARE TO REGARD THE STATE OF THEIR PEOPLE.

I. CORINTHIANS iii. 1, 2.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

CORINTH, an ancient and celebrated city of Greece, was the capital of the province, or canton, of Achaia, in the peninsula called Peloponnesus. Situated between the two seas of Greece, it became very opulent, and pride, luxury, and lewdness, were the consequences of its wealth.

In the eighteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have an account of the visit of St. Paul to this city; of the treatment which he received; and of his success in planting a church. At Corinth the Apostles found Aquila, and Priscilla, had been converted to the christian faith, and who had lately come from Italy, on account of the edict of the Roman Emperor, banishing all Jews from Rome. With these persons he resided, and wrought with them, at their trade of tent making.

Upon the sabbath he went to the synagogue and reasoned among the Jews, and with such Gentiles, as met with them upon the subject of religion. But his preaching in the synagogue appears not to have been of long continu-

ance; for when by the coming of Silas, and Timotheus, from Macedouia, he was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus is Christ, they rose in opposition, and broke out into open blasphemy. Upon this he forsook the synagogue, warning the Jews of their danger, and afterwards taught in a house that was near, belonging to a Gentile of the name of Justus, who before had renounced idolatry, and had become a worshipper of God. Though the Jews made insurrection against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat to be tried by Gallio the deputy of Achaia, they were disappointed in their malicious purpose, and he was protected, and continued a year and six months at Corinth, so that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised.

Soon after Paul left Corinth, other teachers, of a different character, with high pretensions, disturbed, and divided the people. Of the state of the church the apostle was in one way and another informed, and he wrote this letter, probably, from Ephesus, in reply to one which he had received from Corinth. His letter to the church embraces more things than are to be found in theirs to him, for it notices corrupt doctrines, and practices, existing among them, concerning which they had made no mention. They were in a proper mood to be satisfied with nothing, for any length of time, and their ears itched for something more deep, and far fetched, than the plain, practical, doctrine which the Apostle had inculcated. He could better judge of their case than they could themselves, and he had adapted his preaching to their circumstances.

He mentions in the passage now selected for consideration, what was his method of teaching, while at Corinth, and why he adopted such a method.

In the consideration of this passage, we are led to inquire first what we are to understand by the terms milk and meat. The literal meaning, is obvious to every one; and we all know, that though milk is good for all periods of life, it is so peculiarly suited to infancy, that meat, designed as an aliment, for a state more advanced, will by no means answer as a substitute for it. No terms, perhaps, can be tured

from a literal to a figurative meaning, more easily and naturally, than these.

Christians are represented as born of God, and of course, they must have their infancy, their childhood, their youth, and manhood; every thing that denotes progress in human life, with an exemption from the imbecility, and decline, of old age. The same method of treatment therefore, is expedient, and necessary, with respect to the spiritual man, or the christian in the different stages of his new life, that is practised with respect to the natural man, or the body as it advances from one stage to another. The period of infancy, and childhood, will be longer or shorter in the spiritual life, according as circumstances promote, or retard advancement, and thus he who has been a believer many years, may be in a condition to receive little or no nourishment, from any thing but that which was first administered to him, after he began to live by faith. There must be some progress with every one, for in such a case there is no such thing as standing still; but the progress may be so slow as to be scarcely perceptible; and the utmost point ever reached in the present world may be but a dwarfish elevation.

If we take the apostle's own definitions, we shall not be liable to misapprehend his meaning. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, he says in his epistle to the Hebrews, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. By milk therefore, he intended, the first principles of religion, which he supposed every child of God, having a capacity to understand, however young, and inexperienced he might be, would be able to receive, as the infant receives milk as soon as it is born.

To know what these first principles are, which are so easy of digestion, we must turn to another part of this epistle to the Hebrews. Therefore, having the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of baptisms; and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgment. Those things, though they are hard

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sayings to the men of the world, are obvious matters to the youngest christian, which he can no more be expected to refuse, than the infant can be expected to refuse the milk which is its natural, and necessary food.

Dead works are such as those persons who are alive without the law, perform. St. Paul was well qualified to judge of works of this description, for he had made such works the business of the early part of his life, when ignorant of God's righteousness, he went about to establish a righteousness of his own. How strangely altered was his view of things, when looking back upon his life, he found that those very acts of external obedience, upon which he had placed his dependance, having originated from no principle of life in his heart, from no love to God, but from a motive of selfishness, were dead works, and of course acts of sin, calling for repentance.

Some may suppose that if all the works of an unbeliever are dead works, and if such works are to be repented of, the christian reviewing the conduct in which he was concerned while in a state of unbelief, will be sorry for all those things which he did which in appearance, were right, and in their tendency useful. If so it must be a matter of lamentation to him, that instead of paying his debts, he did not defraud his creditors; that instead of feeding the hungry, he did not drive every beggar from his door; that instead of calling upon God in his family, he did not live altogether prayerless; that instead of reading his Bible, he did not leave it neglected on the shelf; that instead of going to a place of public worship, he did not spend the sabbath in his worldly business; that instead of bridling his tongue, he did not employ it in profane, and libidinous discourse; that instead of a decent deportment, he did not indulge in riot, and debauchery. The bare mention of the consequences is sufficient, to show the absurdity of such a sentiment. Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart. Had he ever repented, he could not have repented of that which was right in the sight of the Lord; but he must have repented, that what he did, right in itself, was not done from a perfect heart, or from a desire to glorify God. If the motive and the act are two distinct things, then

there is something to repent of, in dead works even when the works themselves are commendable. If to disregard the law is criminal; is it not more criminal to disregard the lawgiver; and is not that compliance with the law, virtually, noncompliance, which sets aside the authority of him who gave the law, as a rule of life, and put his own sanction upon it?

From dead works therefore, however profitable they may be to others, no profit can, ultimately, result to him who performs them. God cannot accept that as done to honor him, which was done without any such intention. Dead works will never be rewarded in another world, but unrepented of, they will bring condemnation, and misery, upon the soul.

How strange is it, that men, and even men of sense, and general information, and reflection, are desirous to have a system of morality inculcated from the desk, as the foundation of hope and happiness, which, to say the best of it, does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes, and pharisees; and which, if the scriptures give us correct information will as certainly, and as directly lead to misery, all those who depend upon it for acceptance with God, as any course of sin that ever yet was pursued. Ahab acknowledged that he hated Micaiah, because he did not prophesy good concerning him, but evil. It would have been much more agreeable to the prophet, to communicate good tidings to the king than evil, but he was under indispensable obligations to tell him the truth, and in the truth there could be nothing welcome to such a man. Micaiah must have known that there were some things in the conduct of Ahab externally right; but he considered them to be what they were, dead works; and for that reason he could not, in faithfulness encourage him to expect good. Ahab did right to comply with the direction of Elijah to assemble the people of Israel, and the prophets of Baal, at mount Carmel; he did right also to obey the prophet, who told him how to order his army in the battle with Benhadad; and a still better thing is recorded of him, for he rent his clothes, and put sack-cloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sack-cloth, and went softly, in consequence of the message

of Elijah to him, that the Lord would bring evil upon him, and take away his posterity. For this humiliation of Ahab, though it was not the humiliation of his heart, the judgment threatened to his posterity, was suspended until after his death. As temporary repentance may be followed with a temporary reward, so dead works may answer a good purpose for the present life, but the benefits of them can extend no farther.

Faith towards God is reckoned among first principles in religion. Faith, thus generally expressed, must be understood to refer to various things, and to be a belief in every thing, that respects God. We do not describe a christian when we say he acknowledges the existence of some being to whom he would allow adoration and obedience to be due, for the infidel, who denies revelation, acknowledges the same; and so do the savages of the wilderness. We learn from the scriptures, as well as from other sources of information, that there are gods many and lords many. But the God of the christian is essentially different from all local, and tutelary deities; from all those objects of worship which exist only in the imagination.

The true God must unite in himself all those things which are necessary to perfection; and the true God is the only one in whom the christian believes. He is, alike, God of the hills, and of the plains; for he is every where; his knowledge is infinite, for every thing is under his immediate inspection; his power is unbounded, for all the power of creatures, is derived from him, and contributed by him; his mercy, and his justice are equal to his other attributes, for to suppose the contrary would be to suppose an impossibility: and he is so the God of truth, that he is truth itself. The threatenings and promises of such a God must be depended upon by every one whom faith makes acquainted with him.

Now, faith towards God, embracing many important particulars, is not only a perception of the understanding, but an exercise of the heart. He must be disposed to jesting, rather than to a serious, and proper discussion of the subject, who would deny the being of a God, or who would deny that any attribute belongs to him, which is

essential to perfection. But, we are not to consider every one as possessed of faith, who concedes, verbally, what he cannot deny consistently, nor without bringing reproach upon himself. When the infidel yields, it is for want of weapons to carry on the warfare. If we have genuine faith we shall approve of, and delight in, what we believe; and instead of refusing to grant for truth what is above our comprehensions, we shall see, that if an understanding of every thing had been made our duty, faith would never have been required of us, for faith, and knowledge, are terms which signify different kinds of perception.

Faith towards God therefore, is a belief that he exists in such a manner as he has described, and under such names as he has taken to himself. The doctrine of the Trinity, one God in three persons, puzzles and confounds human reason; and those are the most puzzled, and confounded, who dwell upon it the most, attempting with their own powers and by their own light, to fathom what is more out of their reach than the bottom of the sea, or the most distant star which appears in the firmament. Yet this very doctrine is embraced in that faith which is a first principle, for how can he believe in God, who knows not by what name to address him.

It will be granted that all those who are received as new converts into the church, by the initiating seal, or ordinance, of baptism, are to be viewed as in the infancy of spiritual life, and as capable of receiving no instruction, but what is simple and adapted to a state of inexperience. But it is a well known fact, that our Lord just before he ascended to glory, commissioning his Apostles to go out into the world upon the business to which they were set apart, directed them to mention, among the first things to their hearers, the great mystery of godliness, or what we call the doctrine of the Trinity; for he said, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The commission with which the Apostles were clothed in that early day, was designed to be a warrant to the ministers of

the gospel, in all parts of the world, and in all ages of time; and it has been their universal practice to administer baptism in this way.

The doctrine which we are now attending to, meets us in the first chapter of the bible; and in the last; and comes up in a multitude of other places. Much as it is complained of, it is clearly one of the letters of the christian alphabet; and how he who has never learned it can call himself a christian, is quite unintelligible. Upon this subject the declarations of Christ, and of his inspired servants, are very plain. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say, that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. Every one who attentively hears, will make his own comments upon these passages.

The doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, are external things, and of less importance, mentioned here among first principles, or rudiments of christian knowledge. There has been much disputing with respect to baptism; as to the proper mode, and as to the proper subjects; and many have asserted that John's baptism was christian baptism, and many have denied it. But that baptism is an institution of heaven, the weakest christian can understand; and it is equally clear, that since through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, it is proper to lay on hands in the ordination of ministers.

The resurrection of the dead is another first principle of religion. So universal is death, that men of all persuasions, expect to die, though few so think about it as to realize it. But the resurrection of the dead is a matter not generally, evidenced in the same way; and we know that the sect of the Sadducees denied it, however it may have been with other sects and classes of sinners. Paul inquired before the mag-

nificent assembly which he addressed when Agrippa was present, Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? Surely that power which was exerted to bring man into being at first, is sufficient to restore to life a dead body. Many dead bodies have been raised to life, and their death and resurrection have been made manifest to many witnesses, beyond all possibility of doubt. It is true the days of miracles are past, and we cannot expect to have such proof of this matter as they had who saw Lazarus after he was raised; or the saints who rose at the time when our Savior was crucified. But we see such changes every year in the natural world, as properly improved, will lead us to conclude, that the dead may rise, and, that if there is an uniformity in the works of God, they will. The winter is the death of nature, and the spring its resurrection. Our sleep, every night, resembles death, and when we wake in our beds, it is very much like waking in the grave.

In the scriptures the subject is represented in this light. So man lieth down, says Job, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, we read in Daniel, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt. Our friend Lazarus, said Jesus to his disciples, sleepeth; and he observed with respect to the daughter of Jairus, who was dead, The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. Them also which sleep in Jesus, said St. Paul to the Thessalonians, will God bring with him. There would be no propriety in using such terms with reference to death and the resurrection, if there were not some striking resemblance between sleeping and dying; between waking and rising from the dead; and if so, what we experience here, may instruct us in regard to what we shall experience hereafter.

Of a future state it may be observed, there has been a general expectation, though the ideas of the mind, unassisted upon this subject, have always been quite vague, and incoherent. If the monumental inscription of ancient, and modern Saducees, has been eternal sleep, in the places where the dead were buried, those better informed, because

better disposed; and those not informed at all, have entertained a more correct opinion. The doctrine of the resurrection however, is not a first principle in religion, easily received by the christian, because easily comprehended; but since life, and immortality, are brought to light through the gospel, every one, who in heart believes the gospel, sees the doctrine of the resurrection in the light which the gospel reflects upon it. The christian leaves it to the wise man, whom Paul calls a fool, to inquire, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come; sensible, that the husbandman expects a crop where he sows his seed, though he does not expect ever to gather again the seed which he has scattered. Since the body is continually varying, and from infancy to old age experiences many changes, very perceptible, it is impossible to determine what appearance it will assume at the resurrection. As to the grain, God gives it a body as it pleases him, and to every seed his own body; and he will take care, that his people be furnished with bodies by which they will be known, bodies suited to their condition.

Eternal judgment is the last thing in this Apostolic list of first principles. This is an affair which should never be out of mind. He who believes in eternal judgment, believes that all judgment is committed to the Son; and expects to see him come with the clouds of heaven, in his own mediatorial glory, in the glory of his father; and of the holy angels. Great assemblies have been collected upon different occasions, but at the day of judgment there will be an assembly of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people; the dead, small and great, of every generation, will stand before God. As justice must be done to every one, the conduct of all will be found recorded in the books, or as accurately recited, as if written down particularly; and all the motives, or secret springs of action will be laid open. If the wicked conduct of any shall not be made public, it shall be the wicked conduct of those whose sins are covered over by the atonement.

This is called eternal judgment, principally, because the consequences will be of endless duration. So prone are we to expect good, that no one supposes there will be an end to the happiness of the righteous; while many forced to ad-

mit, that the wicked will be condemned, endeavor to persuade themselves, that their condemnation will be only to a suffering of temporary continuance. But wherever the happiness of the one class, and the misery of the other, are spoken of, everlasting, or something equivalent, is always the term applied to both; and it would destroy the use of language to suppose the same term, in the same passage, so different in its signification. Besides, as the judgment of the great day will respect saints and sinners, how can it be eternal judgment, unless suffering, as well as happiness, be eternal? As it is not our province to decide, it would ill become us to say, that a belief in the doctrine of universal salvation, was never entertained by a christian, but we may with propriety, say, that the doctrine tends to licentiousness, and, that eternal judgment, or the judgment which eternally settles the condition of men, is reckoned by an inspired Apostle, among first principles in religion.

Having attended to the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which the apostle calls milk, let us now inquire what he means by meat. This must be something more difficult to be apprehended, as meat is less easily digested than milk, and it is probably, what St. Peter refers to, when speaking of his beloved brother Paul's epistles, he observes that there are some things in them hard to be understood, St. Paul informed the Corinthians, that he adopted a different method of instruction towards some from what he had practised with them. Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery; even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Nothing is necessary but a close attention to these words, to discover to what they refer. If we examine we shall find, that the hidden wisdom of which St. Paul speaks; the things hard to be understood mentioned by St. Peter; are not found in the epistles to the Corinthians, but in those writings which were addressed to the other churches. We need go no farther than the epistle to the Romans, to find all those hard things, or that hidden wisdom which the apostle imparted to those who were perfect; to such as

were of full age; who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The case of Jacob and Esau is one of the difficult cases, and that of Pharaoh is another. We have the history of these men, and when we read what St. Paul has written of them, we should, if we would understand it, compare it with the history. The historian and the apostle must both be correct in their statements, and what each has said may help to unfold the meaning of the other.

Had we been acquainted with Pharaoh, and had we seen his treatment of the people of Israel, we should undoubtedly have considered him like other tyrants; though hardened to an uncommon degree, and delighting in oppression, regardless of God, and of his fellow creatures. We are told that God hardened his heart; and, that he himself hardened it. The agency of God in this business is very apparent. God sent judgments, one after another upon this wicked man, because he would not consent that Israel should leave his land, and when he applied to Moses to intercede for him, God removed the judgments. As the judgments did not so humble him as to change his heart, he grew more rebellious in consequence of every deliverance, as is the case universally with sinners.

Of Esau it is said in the book of Genesis, that he despised his birthright; and in the epistle to the Hebrews he is called a profane person. If therefore he was an object of hatred to God, was his case peculiar, for God is angry with the wicked every day. That Esau was a wicked man is evident from his undervaluing the blessings of the birthright, which were principally, in that case, spiritual blessings; and from his marrying idolatrous women of Canaan, to the great grief of his parents. The two passages which the apostles cite, one from Genesis, and the other from Malachi, however they may suit the case of Jacob, and Esau, personally, evidently refer to their posterity. Esau never did serve Jacob in person, but the Edomites, descended from Esau, served the Israelites, descended from Jacob.

What St. Paul says of election, and of predestination, we know is hard to be understood, because it is so often misunderstood. To this perhaps St. Peter did not refer, because

he deals in the same doctrine, unless he has reference to something peculiarly hard in the manner of teaching, adopted by his brother apostle. All will grant that God has a knowledge of every thing which is to be, as well as of every thing which is, but all do not consider whether his knowledge is grounded on his determination, or his determination on his knowledge, and all do not see, that if predestination makes things certain, foreknowledge does the same. If we are all so inclined to evil as to be utterly averse to good, when we turn to God, it must be his power that turns us, and he who grants this, grants the substance of what is intended by election, and he who denies it may be inquired of, why he in his prayers, or in any other way acknowledges his dependance upon God.

We are secondly to inquire what was the character of the church at Corinth, when the apostle wrote this epistle. His own words will give us the best information. And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in Christ. As he did not deny, that the church was a church of Christ; he admitted the members to be, in a measure, spiritual, as babes in Christ must be; but there was great evidence of remaining carnality, and he pointed it out to them. For it hath been declared unto me of you my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Some have thought, that the Corinthians ranged themselves under other leaders, who were false teachers, and, that the apostle, to avoid the mention of them, intent only on the division, and contention, of the church, spoke of himself, and of his two brethren, as those who were considered to be heads of the parties. Others however are of a different opinion. It is not very essential, whether these men were intended, or others, whom the Corinthians might compare with them. Apollos, we know, was at Corinth, and preached to great acceptance.

Paul was a great reasoner, a deep logical man, whose preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. His close

argumentative manner, was his principal human recommendation. His bodily presence was weak, and by no means, such as to secure to him the favorable attention of his audience; and his speech, instead of being pleasant, and attractive, was so ungraceful, as to be called contemptible. With all these personal disadvantages, his letters were acknowledged to be weighty, and powerful, and his discourses must have been charged with the force of his mind. There were therefore among the Corinthians those who preferred him, or some man like him, to all other teachers.

It is not necessary to admit, that they who adhered to him, understood him, for often that is the most exalted, which is the least understood. The gift of speaking in an unknown tongue was more highly esteemed in the Corinthian church than the gift of prophesying. For this absurd preference of tongues to prophecy, the Apostle reproves them, and declares, In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. We may here see how strangely men judge; and, that those who adhered to Paul, did not adhere to him on account of the uncommon edification which they received from his preaching; but because they had formed an opinion of him, as a man singularly profound. They appear to have been like many others who bestow much commendation upon what they have heard without considering that if they have heard a good subject, ably discussed, they ought to take fast hold of instruction, and make it profitable to themselves.

Apollos was a very different man from Paul. He was a Jew, born at Alexandria; a celebrated city in lower Egypt; built by Alexander the great, soon after the destruction of Tyre; between three and four hundred years before Christ. Living here, Apollos might have had great advantages, particularly on account of the famous Alexandrian library, which, when it was destroyed by the Saracens, is said to have consisted of seven hundred thousand volumes. Though Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, his argumentative powers seem not to have formed his prominent distinction. Eloquence was rather that in which he excelled. As an

orator he attracted the attention of many, and they preferred him to Paul; not because the matter of his discourse was superior, but because his manner of delivery was more graceful; and perhaps his stature and form were more commanding. A personable man, with a sonorous, pleasant voice, who can descant upon a subject, in a style easy and elegant, is usually popular, and will gather a crowd around him, to gaze at the splendor of his abilities, if no better motive has influence to collect them.

It has been thought that Apollos left Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital, because he was displeased with the attention which was bestowed upon him, from wrong motives. The character given of Apollos, forbids us to suppose that he made a display of his eloquence, from the vanity of his mind and to win followers to himself, for the words of Christ will universally hold true, He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. The case was with him, especially at Corinth as it has often been with others; more regard was paid to the ambassador than to the commission under which he acted.

As Apollos was very different from Paul; Cephas, or as he is more commonly called, Peter, differed as much from them both. Apollos had been favored with instruction at Alexandria; Paul had been brought up at Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, a distinguished Jewish doctor; but Peter had had little or no education; and had followed the business of catching fish upon the sea of Galilee. This want of education, perhaps recommended him to those who chose him for a leader. Many are prejudiced against learning, and suppose, that he who cannot, with ordinary help, preach without it, cannot with it. Human nature being always the same, the proof of Peter's inspiration might appear stronger to some than that of Paul, or Apollos, for they might think, that with Paul and Apollos, preaching was a profession; something for which they had qualified themselves by their studies. If you should think this inadmissible, upon the supposition, that Peter's adherents were real christians, you may call to mind the incoherent things,

sometimes advanced by such as you esteem christians. It might be known at Corinth, what success attended Peter's preaching upon the day of pentecost, when about three thousand souls were added to the church; and this affair might confirm the opinion entertained, that Peter was the first, and ablest preacher.

While at Corinth, some were for Paul; some for Apollos; and some for Cephas; some were for neither of them; nor for any other preacher; but for Christ. There have been such persons, perhaps, in all ages, calling themselves christians, and setting up high pretensions to religious experience, while living in the general neglect of public worship, if not of family worship, and of many other duties, as plainly enjoined as either. That such a course of life is to be accounted for from the carnality of the heart, is unquestionable; and whether those who live in this manner, can have any knowledge of christianity, is known only to him who has a thorough knowledge of all things. It seems to be plain, that the enjoyment of a christian must be in proportion to the sincerity, and strictness of his obedience; For if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It is to be noticed thirdly, that the carnality of the Corinthian church, was the reason why the Apostle fed them with milk, and not with meat; why he confined his preaching among them to the first, and easy principles of religion, instead of dwelling upon the hidden wisdom, or the abstruse things which he spoke of before those who were more perfect in knowledge, and experience. Two reasons were influential with him to regulate his practice. He well knew they could not understand the deep things of God, which God, by his spirit, had revealed to him; and of which he delighted to speak to others, when he found any capable of receiving them.

As the nurse would not give meat, but milk, to an infant; as the preceptor would not set a mathematical problem, but the alphabet, before one who had just begun to learn his letters; so the apostle conducted, inculcating such things as the circumstances of the case rendered expedient; becoming all things to all men, that he might by all means save some, and making it his rule to keep back nothing

from any, from any motive whatever, which he judged could be profitable.

However desirous he might be to give his Corinthian brethren farther instruction, he felt himself under necessity to wait for the time to come, when their minds would be sufficiently expanded, and their hearts suitably disposed, to allow him an opportunity. He was farther sensible, that as they could not derive benefit from truths difficult to be understood, and to them quite unintelligible, so damage might accrue to them from any attempt which he should make, prematurely to instruct them; and this was another reason, why he gave them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. It is readily admitted, that unsuitable food would injure an infant, and that the mind of a child should not be pushed beyond its strength, and capacity.

But it may be thought, if salvation is secured to the christian by the covenant of grace, nothing can be an evil to him. Nothing indeed can deprive the christian of that inheritance, to which, as a child of promise, he has a title. All christians may adopt the exulting language of St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, For I am persuaded, that neither death; nor life; nor angels; nor principalities; nor powers; nor things present; nor things to come; nor height; nor depth; nor any other creature; shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. It does not follow however, that he can sustain no damage, who will not be finally lost. Ye did run well, the apostle says to the Gallatians, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? If by any thing they had been so hindered in their christian race, as to be turned from a course of duty to one of disobedience, it was a serious evil; it was a damage which nothing could repair, but a humble and faithful retracing of their steps. St. Peter directs husbands and wives, to live together in harmony and love, that their prayers be not hindered. As blessings are granted in answer to prayer, much must be lost by the neglect of that duty. But when ye sin so against the brethren, St. Paul says to the Corinthians, speaking of such meats as were offered in sacrifice to idols, and wound their weak

conscience, ye sin against Christ. If a christian is injured, when his body is wounded, why not when his conscience is wounded? But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, who believe in me, says our Savior, it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. If the crime here mentioned is so great, then the damage caused by the criminal, must be great in proportion. Those who are in a condition to receive the plain truths of the gospel, might be filled with darkness, and doubts, in consequence of the inculcation of deep mysteries; and instead of being edified they would be puzzled, confounded, and well nigh distracted.

Our subject leads us to some reflections, the first of which is, that if we are opposed to things in religion, which are hard to be understood; to the hidden mystery of which the apostle speaks; our opposition must arise from our carnality. The apostle fed the Corinthians with milk, because they were not able to bear meat; and the reason why they were not able was, that they were carnal. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and against his way of salvation. The world has always been in arms against the truth. God sent his prophets to proclaim the truth, and carnal men, exasperated at the message, put the messengers to death. Jesus Christ came, in the fulness of time, and he was treated in the same way. It was in vain for Pilate to inquire, Why; what evil hath he done? He had borne witness to the truth, in public, and upon all occasions. To this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world. The apostles followed their Lord: and with the same doctrine provoked the same wrath, and shared with scarcely an exception, the same fate. The martyrs all suffered in the same cause. Let us not undertake to justify our opposition. It admits of no justification. If we allow the scriptures to be a revelation from heaven, where is our consistency, in denying any thing that they contain?

Though it appears evident, that all opposition, to deep and mysterious things in religion arises from carnality in the heart, it does not follow, that the heart is wholly carnal, which opposes these things. St. Paul's address to the

Corinthians is, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth; and he says to them, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual; but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in Christ. He did not think it impossible for them to be in Christ, and at the same time carnal, for he knew, that carnality is but another name for sin, and that as all men are imperfect in the present world, there will be more or less carnality, or sin, in every christian. He had a standard by which to estimate the degrees of carnality, and by that standard, indeed, he found the Corinthian church to be carnal, in a very high, and an uncommon degree. But though we find the apostle dealing much in reproof, he no where uses any uncharitable language. He was as good a judge of the human heart and of the change which grace causes in it, as we can expect any where to find. His example we should endeavor to follow. If our brethren do not see with us, or withstand us in things of an abstruse nature, we should not on that account withdraw our charity from them, and conclude they cannot be brethren of the Lord, but rather look back to the Corinthian church, which was fed with milk, because in such an infantile and carnal state as to be unable to receive any thing beside.

Those who entertain a hope, that they are the children of God, and are yet against hearing any thing but the simplest truths, would do well, frequently, and attentively, to read those scriptures which treat upon mysterious matters; particularly the epistle to the Romans, and consider what is meant by the terms used. When you read of election, or of predestination, you must suppose, that something is intended. What is it? Make up an opinion for yourselves; but be careful to take such materials as the Holy Ghost has furnished.

Apparent as it is, that nothing but carnality in the heart opposes the difficult doctrines of the Bible, we must not too hastily conclude, that we are not carnal, if those are the doctrines which we wish ever to have brought into view. There were those who were for Paul at Corinth, and they, for ought that appears, were as carnal as the others. From his own mouth, or in some other way, individuals might gain some idea of the mysterious doctrines which he embra-

ced, though he did not broach them generally at Corinth. From the apostle's mode of address to that church we infer, that he would have been more acceptable, had he dealt more in mysteries. It may be thought impossible, that carnal men should be both opposed to mysteries and in favor of them. But we are told that the law is good if a man use it lawfully. May there not then be an unlawful use of the law? We read also, But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. May not persons therefore opposed to the law, make it their object, and study, as Saul of Tarsus did, with Gamaliel? However it may be accounted for, I could refer you to men notoriously intemperate, who are great sticklers for the stoutest orthodoxy of the Calvinistic creed.

One reflection more shall conclude this discourse. There are different opinions respecting what is the proper, and profitable, method of preaching. Paul observed in his last interview with the elders of Ephesus, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. It has been inferred from this, that every thing which is true, and especially, such truths, as are most difficult to be understood, should be brought by the ministers of the gospel before their congregations. If this is a fair inference, was not the apostle, in his preaching at Corinth, as much to be blamed as any one who ever undertook the business of preaching; for according to his own statement he fed them with milk, and not with meat; and when he spoke of the hidden wisdom, it was before such as were perfect. He probably considered the elders of Ephesus to be capable of understanding the hidden wisdom, so far as was necessary to make a proper improvement of it; and for this reason, he declared to them the whole counsel of God. Since those who are carnal, can bear nothing but milk, or the first principles of religion, and since in every congregation, there are, probably, many persons of this description, what shall the ministers of the gospel do, to conform to the practice of Paul, and to be able to say, like him, when parting with their people, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men?

Your present pastor, though he has always doubted the expediency of dwelling, largely, upon the wisdom of God in a mystery, or the hidden wisdom, before a mixed assembly, has had many an anxious hour, to find so many persons in this place, and particularly, in this church, apparently opposed to the very language of the scriptures used in reference to this subject. Milk is as necessary here as it ever was at Corinth; and for the same reason. My predecessor, for ought that I know, might have spent his days here had he been less urgent, upon some points; and whoever may succeed me, may leave you as he did, should he pursue the same course. Let me improve this opportunity to enter my solemn protest against every scheme of religious doctrine which makes the salvation of man, in any measure, to depend upon himself; which leaves out of view the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, and which supposes divine agency unnecessary to renew and sanctify the heart, that it may be prepared for the service and enjoyment of God on earth and in heaven.

SERMON IV.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

I. THESSALONIANS iv. 16, 17.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

THESE words were designed for comfort to the believers at Thessalonica, in their seasons of bereavement and sorrow; and they are precious words to all believers, and in all circumstances; especially when trials are so great, that nature is ready to sink under them.

The apostle did not intend to forbid, or discountenance sorrow of every kind, but only that which has no hope connected with it; for sorrow may be so indulged, as to be very proper, and very profitable. If we part with our friends, expecting never to see them again, the scene will be sorrowful, in proportion to the strength of our attachment; but if we realize a future state, we shall anticipate a future meeting; and one attended with peculiar advantages to the children of God; so that instead of gloom there will be much comfort in parting.

Upon the religion contained in the word of God we are dependant for an extensive prospect. When the Sun of righteousness shines upon the soul, the effect is the same as when the natural sun appears, and scatters the fog which, concealing distant objects, made the circle of vision narrow.

To all unbelievers, whether they be called Pagans; Mahometans; Jews; or Christians; the grave is the termination of sight. Faith only can discover to us another state of being, and show us how interesting is our connection with it.

Things of the first importance are brought up to view in our text; of the first importance to us all, for they concern each one. Let us take them up in their order.

First, The Lord here spoken of, is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ. From the history which we have of him we may derive many particulars with regard to his character. He has been in our world, in the condition of humanity; with this difference only between him and other men, that there was no sin attached to him; for he was actually born of a woman, and his first place of repose, after he was born, was a manger; circumstances forbidding him better accommodations. Notwithstanding the cradle of this infant was the manger where the cattle fed, the angels thought themselves honored in coming down to communicate the intelligence of his birth to the shepherds and to sing a song of praise to God for an event so auspicious. Wise men from the east, regardless of the expense and fatigue of a long journey, sought the place where this wonderful child was; and having found him, by the guidance of that new star which was intended for the purpose, whatever respect they paid to his mother, they fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him, gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Simeon, and Anna, two aged persons who had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, manifested their exceeding joy in beholding in this little child, one whom they were taught to consider as the Savior of the world. Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, when it was said, that one was born who was to be king of the Jews.

At twelve years of age, his parents carried him to Jerusalem, to attend the feast of the passover; and there he took his seat in the temple among the doctors, or public teachers, that he might have an opportunity to hear them, and to ask them questions. He was probably much among his acquaintance and friends; and his parents set out for home, concluding that though he was not with them, he was some-

where in the company. Having travelled a whole day however, without finding him, they returned, with anxiety, to Jerusalem; and after a diligent search of three days, they found him to their great amazement, and satisfaction. The gentle reproof which his mother gave him, furnished him with an opportunity to make a reply, which though she did not understand it, she laid it up carefully in her heart. Wist ye not that I must be about my fathers business? The understanding manifested in his questions and answers in the temple, astonished all who were witnesses; and doubtless, the Jewish doctors no less than the rest.

When he was about thirty years of age, he commenced his public ministry, because that was the age at which the priests, under the law, entered upon the duties of their office; and as they were washed, or baptised, as a preparatory measure, so he received baptism from John, that he might fulfil all righteousness; or illustrate those typical ordinances by which he had been represented. The circumstances attending the baptism of Christ, are unparalleled and deserve to be kept in the remembrance of his people. And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. A long series of temptations succeeded the baptism of Christ, for we are informed, that he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. This enemy, knowing who he was, and what was his business, could not have expected to succeed in his mischievous endeavors; but his malice prompted him to exert himself even in a desperate case.

The life of Christ was a life of poverty, reproach, and suffering, but he accomplished his work without being hindered by any of the attempts which were made to hinder him in the performance of it. He called from their secular employments those whom he chose to have for his disciples, and the propagators of his religion; and he qualified them for the business which he had for them to do. He fulfilled the prophecies respecting himself, in his meek and lowly

deportment, for he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and he washed his disciples feet to set them an example of kindness and condescension. When his time was come to die, he submitted to the painful, and ignominious death, which his enemies had chosen to subject him to, and breathed out his soul upon the cross between malefactors.

It will not be wondered at, that he should be called the Lord, who appeared in such a state of humiliation, if his whole history is taken into consideration; for then it will be seen with what authority he spoke; and acted. As if they were a herd of submissive animals, he drove out the traffickers from the temple, having no means of compulsion, but a scourge made of small cords. The winds ceased from roaring, and the waves from raging; when he said to them, Peace; be still. Evil spirits obeyed his order, and immediately departed from those persons whom they had possessed; nor could they enter into the swine without first obtaining permission from him. His voice when employed for the purpose, was heard in the caverns of the dead; and in obedience to it, the departed spirit returned to dwell again in the body, which had been lifeless long enough to be putrid. He forgave sins, though every sin is committed against God; and though God only can pardon sin. The union of two natures in Christ; one divine, and the other human, will account for what he did, and for what he suffered; and this union must be admitted to make the whole consistent. Having finished the work which he came into the world to accomplish; and having laid down his own life and taken it up again, he ascended to heaven; and when he shall appear a second time it will be for a different purpose, and in far different circumstances. With respect to this we have various representations; and one very sublime one, is contained in the passage now under consideration.

Second, Let us inquire what we are to understand by the shout by which the Lord, will be attended when he shall descend from heaven. The angels will accompany him, and doubtless they will come shouting, for they hailed his first appearance, and ministered to him afterwards, and have

ever taken a deep interest in the work of redemption. Many thousands of angels are spoken of as present, when God appeared upon mount Sinai to give the law to Moses; but all the holy angels are to come with the Son of man, the Lord of angels, when he shall come upon the interesting occasion, we are now considering. How loud a shout must that be, which will be made with the united voices of an innumerable company of angelic beings!

The spirits of just men made perfect, all the saints who shall be at that time in heaven, gathered from all countries, and from every generation, will join in the shout; for they will feel infinitely interested in the descent of the Lord from heaven, as the consummation of their bliss will depend upon it. We are taught to expect a still greater revolution or manifestation of the glory of Christ, in the salvation in which his people are concerned, when he shall raise their bodies and unite their souls with them, and pass that sentence of approbation, which will be a public testimony of his everlasting love. Though there is no uneasiness in heaven therefore, we may conclude, that those who have so much in prospect, will exult to have the day come which will realize their expectations, and add so greatly and so essentially, to their enjoyments.

Another class of holy beings who shall join in this shout will be composed of those believers who will then be upon earth. There are always inducements enough to those who are in the exercise of faith, to wish for a removal from such a world as this; for as every year brings its own vegetation with it, so every year brings its own troubles with it, and every season, and every moment. But the days of millennial happiness are to be succeeded by days of uncommon wickedness, and opposition to the truth, and all who embrace it; so, that when the Lord shall come he will find his people in great difficulty, and of course greatly transported at his appearance, for he will appear for their redemption. If a deliverance from evils is viewed as a great favor, even by those who are to continue in an evil world, and in a condition which will expose them to evils again; what must their feelings be who see their Lord coming to grant them a complete and final deliverance from evils of every de-

scription! They will join the loud shout began by the inhabitants of heaven; and make it much louder by the addition of all their voices.

This shout will be a mingled one, not only because it will unite the voice of different orders of holy beings; but because the wicked likewise, of every class will take a part in it. The devils inquired of Christ, when he was upon earth, whether he had come to torment them before the time. What they intended by the time of which they spoke, we may well understand, for we are informed that they are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. When this interesting time shall actually arrive, and the Lord their judge shall actually appear, will not their horror and anguish be extreme; and will they not cry out, with the most doleful and vociferous lamentations! As the day of judgment will be a day of peculiar darkness and distress to those apostate angels who will then receive their sentence, so it will be also to all those wicked men whom they shall have drawn into their dungeon of despair; for it will greatly increase the evils of a condition altogether evil before. Can they therefore be silent, and indifferent, spectators of a scene to them so infinitely interesting, and tremendous as this? Will not their cry be as loud as their strength will permit them to make it?

When the Lord shall descend, he will find a multitude of wicked people in this world, whom he will come upon by surprise, and disappoint in their expectations; disconcerting and bringing to an end, all their schemes of wickedness. Such an arrest, from the hands of that Almighty Being, to whom they must hasten to give an account of their conduct, must be productive of feelings unutterable, and of lamentations never before witnessed.

It may be thought by some persons, that the shout of which we have been speaking is nothing more than the acclamation of the angels, by whom the Lord will be accompanied; and it must be acknowledged, that shout is a term, which in its general acceptation carries in it an idea of joy, and exultation. But there can be no doubt, that saints, in heaven, and on earth, will join with the angels in

their shout, for their interest in the affair will be much greater than that of the angels; and there can be as little doubt, that the devils, and wicked men; whether in hell, or upon earth, will feel an excitement which they will be unable to conceal, for woes will be clustering around them. That such will be the state of things seems evident from a passage in the Revelation of St. John. Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; even so, Amen.

It appears therefore, that many dolorous shrieks will be heard at the same time when angels and saints shall be singing their triumphant song of praise; and that a cry of distress may be called a shout, may be seen from the following words in the book of Lamentations. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old; He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; he hath made my chain heavy; also when I cry, and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.

Third, As mention is made of the voice of the Archangel, we may inquire who this Archangel is. Men sometimes speak of Archangels, but in the scriptures we nowhere find the term used in the plural. In some passages it evidently means Jesus Christ; and there is nothing which decides that it does not in every passage. If Jesus Christ is always intended, we can account for it, that the definite article is always employed, and the singular number; but upon any other supposition, this circumstance presents a great difficulty. As the scriptures were given to us, that we might read, compare, and as far as we are able, understand them, let us collect the different things that are said about the Archangel, that we may know how to think of him, and how to speak about him.

We will make our first quotation from Jude. Yet Michael, the arch angel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation; but said, The Lord rebuke thee. It may be thought, by some, that Peter in the following words refers to the same thing to which Jude refers; Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might,

bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord. If the same thing were referred to by the two apostles, we should conclude Michael to be a created angel; differing from other angels only in this, that his station is more dignified. But it will be seen, that Peter is not speaking of the devil, as Jude is, but of dignities, or rulers; and, that he says the angels bring not a railing accusation against them, though men are often so presumptuous as to speak evil of them.

Michael is a name which signifies, Who is like God? With what propriety could such a name be given to any one who is not God himself? When the Psalmist inquires, Who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord; no one is at a loss for his meaning. An angel said to Daniel, But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but lo Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. We should not be led from this passage alone, to consider Michael entitled to the highest possible honors. But the angel, in a farther communication, sets this matter in a clear light. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth; and there is none that holdeth with me in those things, but Michael your prince. Could Michael be called the prince of the Jewish nation, if he were nothing more than a created angel? He is spoken of again in the book of Daniel in the following manner, And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of thy people. This must be Christ, for to no one beside will the words pertinently apply. Michael is spoken of in the Revelation of St. John in such a manner as to leave no doubt who he is. And there was war in heaven, Michael, and his angels fought against the dragon. Would the angels be represented as Michael's angels, if there were not an infinite difference between him and them? One angel cannot be the proprietor of the rest. Jude, in what he says about Michael the arch angel, uses language similar to that in a passage in Zechariah, and the prophet may be the interpreter of the apostle; and the apostle the interpreter of the prophet. The words of Zechariah are these. And he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord; and

satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto satan, The Lord rebuke thee O satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Michael said to satan, The Lord rebuke thee; and the Lord said to satan, The Lord rebuke thee. If we admit the distinction of persons in the Godhead, there is no difficulty in understanding these passages.

But if Michael is Christ, why should he fear to bring a railing accusation? Because it would have been improper, and inconsistent with his character. Compare this with a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, which refers directly to Christ. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayer and supplications, with strong crying, and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Turn also to words of God himself, in the thirty second chapter of Deuteronomy. I said I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men. Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy; lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely; and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this. It appears therefore, that there is a sense in which it may be said, that even the Lord is afraid. Of course, the fear which Michael had is nothing against the supposition, that Michael is but another name for Christ. Michael is the Archangel; the Archangel is the head, or Lord of angels; and Christ, in the various appearances which he made to the patriarchs appeared as an angel, the angel of the Lord.

Let us now return to the text; and inquire, whether St. Paul meant the same by the Archangel that St. Jude did; and that is meant by Michael where his name is mentioned. Some suppose that because the Lord is mentioned in this passage, he would not be called, immediately, by another name, and therefore, that the Archangel is some mighty created angel, who will accompany him in his descent. But why may he not be distinguished by two names here, as well as in this passage in the epistle to the Romans? But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the

dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Did the apostle separate the names Jesus, and Christ, and then speak of the resurrection of the same glorious being, first under one name, and then under the other, without having any thing in view in this mode of speaking? God is called by many names and Christ is called by many names. Why is it so unless these several names have their uses, conveying each, some idea, not to be found in the rest? Though we are told therefore, that the Lord himself shall descend, we may learn something more about him, by being informed that his voice shall be that of the Archangel. If from the change of terms we derive no advantage in considering the descent of the same glorious Lord; perhaps, the apostle did; and perhaps all do, who have a large share of the same faith which he possessed.

Fourth, What is the trump of God which is to be sounded when the Lord shall descend, and the Archangel's voice shall be heard? No visible, and material trumpet will be sounded. The language is figurative; but something will take place, of which the sounding of such a trumpet would be an apt similitude. Trumpets, by divine appointment, were much used among the Jews, to direct their marches; and to collect their solemn assemblies; and they were blown by the priests over their burning sacrifices, especially at the solemn festivals. When the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, and called Moses up to meet him, the scene was most terrific; and in addition to the thunders, and the lightning, and the smoke which rose like the smoke of a furnace; the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder, and louder. But nothing that ever was, will bear to be compared with what is here called the trump of God. Other trumpets if made by the direction of God, were made by the hands of men; and men were employed in sounding them. Their sound though sufficient to answer the purpose for which it was intended, was a limited sound; extending over but a small surface; and heard by but a small number of people. The trump of God, will not only call to attention the inhabitants of the earth; the living, whether righteous or wicked; and the

devils, wherever they may be found carrying on their work of mischief; but it will sound distinctly, through all the gloomy regions of the dead; and awaken every particle of sleeping dust, whether on the land, or in the sea. Who can form any conception of that trump compared with whose blast, the loudest thunder is even less than a whisper; which will make not only the hills, and the mountains tremble, but the whole earth; and break the slumbers of all the dead, from Abel to the last lifeless body. When the omnipotent voice said, Lazarus come forth, he obeyed the order immediately, and took his place again among the living; and when the trump of God shall give the summons upon the day of the resurrection, he will rise to die no more; and with him will rise the great congregation of the dead.

Fifth, We are informed that the dead in Christ shall rise first; that is, before the living believers shall ascend to heaven. By these we are to understand departed believers. They who are united to Christ, are frequently spoken of as dead, even while living in this world. It is a faithful saying; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. St. Paul particularly describes his own case: For I was alive, without the law, once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Connecting himself with the Roman brethren, to whom he was writing, he says, Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also, should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together, in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Here the idea is extended: the persons are considered as not only dead but buried also; or in the situation of the seed when it is planted in the ground, and covered.

The meaning of this language is sufficiently obvious. Every one who is a subject of grace may be viewed as dead, because old things have passed away, and all things have become new with him, as really as if he had exchanged

worlds. He sees God, and himself, and his duty, and his interest, and his privileges, and his dangers, as he never saw them before; and now he loves what he formerly hated; and¹ hates what he formerly loved; seeks what he once shunned; and shuns what he once sought. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

But the language in our text leads us to consider the persons spoken of, not only as they appear living, and acting their part upon the stage of life; but also, with reference to their death, and the manner of it. Those who are here called the dead in Christ are referred to, where it is said, Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord. Those who die, believing in Christ, as the Lord, may be said to die in the Lord, and when dead, it may be said they are dead in Christ. Jesus Christ, when considered only as the name of a man, may point out that man, the Son of David, who according to prophecy, was to be born into the world; but when no other meaning is attached to it, is it of any more importance than Peter, or any other name? Can those be said to be dead in Christ who were acquainted with him while he was here upon earth; and on that account merely, died with the firm persuasion of the reality of such a person.

To acknowledge the name can be of no use, if we deny what is signified by it. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. This, certainly, could not be true, if nothing more were intended than the belief that a person once existed, bearing such a name; for every person who ever saw him, doubtless had this belief; and every person now who credits testimony, must be possessed of the same belief.

But are all born of God? Do the scriptures warrant such a supposition; and particularly does the passage here cited? If they are designated as born of God, who believe that Jesus is the Christ; is not the inference unavoidable, that some are not born of God; and that some do not believe that Jesus is the Christ? Upon any other supposition has the passage any meaning? As Christ is the Anointed of God, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, is to believe all fundamental truths: the being of a God; the apostacy of man;

and the wonderful things that have been done for his redemption.

It is essential to the efficacy of this faith, that it be in the heart, as well as in the understanding; for those who cannot trust might as well be without faith. Indeed the more there is of light, where there is no love, the worse is the condition. Those who can adopt St. Paul's language, as descriptive of their own case are prepared both for life, and death: For I know I have believed; and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. There can be no doubt, that they are dead in Christ who die as St. Stephen did. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God; or invoking; and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

We are informed that the dead in Christ shall rise first. All speculation with respect to this matter is useless, and improper. But some men will say how are the dead raised up; and with what body do they come? The apostle's reply is, Thou fool; that which thou sowest, is not quickened except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain. Heaven is so different a world from this, that we ought not to expect the same appearances there that are exhibited here. The bodies of the saints, when they shall be raised, will differ one from another, as one star differeth from another star in glory. God's people may leave the world in infancy; or in age; with the dropsy; or with the consumption; but when they shall rise from the dead, they will not be attended with similar circumstances. We can form some idea how Eli looked when he died; but we know not how he will look when he shall rise. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. This we know; and with this we should be satisfied. As Eli was not always aged, and corpulent, while he was in this world; age, and corpulence, will be no more essential to his identity hereafter, than they were here. That which is sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption; but notwithstanding the amazing alteration each one will have his own body, and the probability is, that all will remember their former acquaintances.

Nothing is said in the passage we are considering, relative to the resurrection of the wicked; nor do we know from any communication, with what bodies they will appear; though we are told, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. That the wicked will not have glorified bodies like the saints, is certain; and that they will not have such bodies as they have in this world, seems to be equally certain; because mortal bodies must be dissolved. As the bodies, as well as the souls, of the wicked, will be destroyed with an everlasting destruction; their bodies must be susceptible of pain; and continue so through eternity; and we may conclude, that their sufferings will be productive of much distortion, and deformity in their appearance. Whatever change may take place in the wicked, we may suppose, that those who were once acquainted, will not be strangers to each other. The resemblance will be sufficiently strong to keep up the recollection.

Sixth, Having spoken of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, as departed believers; the apostle proceeds to tell what will become of the Lord's people, who will be alive when he shall come. Then we, which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. The resurrection of the dead must be a spectacle astonishingly grand, and interesting to all the inhabitants of the earth who shall be called to behold it; and not more dreadful, and appalling, to the ungodly, than welcome, and enlivening, to the righteous.

Some have supposed, because the apostle speaks in the first person plural, that he expected, himself, to live until these great events should take place. But this supposition cannot be admitted, because it is inconsistent with what he says in other places. He could not upon any principles, of common calculation, have concluded, that his life would be very greatly protracted; and, that he was not looking for the Lord to come, immediately, may be seen in a passage in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and by our gathering together unto him; That ye be not soon

shaken in mind, or be troubled; neither by spirit, nor by word; nor by letter; as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. He then assures them, that there will be first a falling away; and describes the man of sin, with the abominations which have since appeared in the church of Rome. In what he says in this passage, he evidently refers the Thessalonians to his first epistle to them, and probably to our present text, and endeavors to guard them against a misapprehension of his meaning.

It was proper that the apostle should use the term we, when speaking of those who should live long after his departure, for he wrote under the direction of the spirit; and could not make any misuse of terms. The people of God resemble each other in so many particulars; and are so essentially one, by their union with Christ, that he might well consider himself as embodied with a future generation; and he might use this mode of expression, as best adapted to describe those whom he intended. If he was viewed as one of them, then they were to be viewed as such as would bear a resemblance to him. This mode of expression also, betokened his ardent affection for those unborn brethren of himself, and of the Lord, for we are disposed to couple ourselves with all in whose welfare we take a deep interest.

With respect to those of the Lord's people who shall be here alive when he shall come to awake the dead, as they are to be taken up to heaven, and incorporated with the pure society of that holy world, it is evident, that something very important must take place to qualify them; something equivalent to what they experience, who die in the Lord. Of this the apostle speaks in his first epistle to the Corinthians, where he treats so largely of the resurrection. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed; In a moment; in the twinkling of an eye; at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, incorruptible and we shall be changed. Every one can see, that the gross body will need such an entire transformation as will remove all that is mortal, and corruptible, belonging to it; and it is equally certain, that the soul, though renewed, and partially sanctified, must be

made very different from what it ever is, while a tenant of a house of clay.

The strongest language that is suitable with respect to any body of christians in the present world is, that they are Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace; and the very language employed, supposes the case to be a doubtful one; and one attended with much imperfection. Whoever considers the discipline exercised in churches in general; or the need which there is of discipline, must be sensible, that the real disciples of Christ may be compared to grain before it is fanned; or to gold before it is refined; so that much must be done before they can be incorporated as members of that society which nothing ever disturbs. The contention was so sharp between Paul and Barnabas upon a certain occasion, that they separated. It is no uncommon thing for professors of religion to speak half in the speech of Ashdod, and to be so at variance one with another, that they cannot come to the same sacramental table, nor even keep up the ordinary friendly intercourse of life. If I cannot partake of the most solemn and endearing ordinance with my brother, if I cannot go to his house, nor welcome him to mine; can I meet him in heaven, until that sin is done away from my heart which is now my only obstacle? From what we read; and from what we see; it is evident, that a change is necessary, and a radical, and thorough one, in the nature of man; and that no one can go from this world to heaven, either through the valley of the shadow of death, or translated as Elijah was, without being purified from the defilement of sin, in every part and completely.

The saints of every description, are to be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. Both Daniel and John make mention of clouds, in their description of the coming of the Lord; and, probably, because clouds will increase the awful majesty of the scene. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, come with the clouds of heaven; and came to the Ancient of days; and they brought him near before him. Behold! he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him. It is not for us to assign the reason why the place of meeting should be

the air, rather than the earth. To know that it is the Lord's pleasure that it should be so, is enough for us to know. Gladly will his people listen to, and obey, his voice when he shall say, Come up hither. The assurance, that they shall be forever with the Lord, will be received with the highest possible transport.

In this world, the intercourse between believers and their Lord is much interrupted, so that they have frequent occasion to say, Why standest thou afar off, O God; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation! Every one acquainted with the christian life knows, that it is far from being uniform. Sin upon the soul is like a dark cloud upon the sun; and there is much sin in God's people to darken their prospects, and to keep them from beholding the bright face of the Sun of righteousness. St. John speaking of this matter says, If we say, that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. As nothing but sin can separate God's people from God; and as sin can have no place in heaven; so the people of God will be with him forever.

We may be disposed curiously to inquire, what will be the business in heaven, and how the inhabitants can find employment, through the endless ages of eternity. The scene will there be, doubtless, quite a new one. The occupations of this world, will have no place in that world, where there can be no loss, and where no gain will be counted any thing, but gain in holiness. The Bible furnishes us with information sufficient to raise our hopes; but with nothing to gratify our idle curiosity.

With reference to the day of judgment, the apostle Paul addresses to the Corinthians these inquiries; Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? In some way the saints will partake in that solemn transaction which will decide the condition of mankind, individually, and of those apostate angels who will be doomed to outer darkness, and endless woe; and they are represented as kings, and priests, unto God. If they shall be engaged in contemplating the name, the character, the works, and ways of God, they will never be idle, but always have a subject sufficient to exercise all their

powers. An infinite subject can never be exhausted. A review of life, in all its scenes and circumstances, with all the evils attending it, and all the deliverances experienced in it, will never become tedious, but afford continual pleasure. If all have not the same things to think of that Paul and Manasseh will have; all the redeemed will consider themselves as redeemed from all iniquity; and the more sensible they are, that they have been children of wrath the more sensible they will be of their obligations to him who has made them the children of his grace. It is impossible that there should be any place in this world so busy as heaven is, where as there is no night, so there is no cessation from business; and where all the business is the adoration, and praise of God.

We have now traced our subject through its various parts and will bring it to a close with a few reflections. What an august exhibition must that be, when those things shall be realized which are spoken of in this passage of scripture! Many go to the theatre that they may behold the actors on the stage, and be entertained with their performances. Many are attracted with the pomp of war; with the sight of armies, and fleets; or stand gazing to see a vessel navigate the air, and carry men far above the world. Great as any of these things may be, in themselves considered, what are they, when compared with things infinitely greater! The psalmist has given us a most sublime account of what the apostle describes in our text. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. If we couple these two representations, we have the whole picture; and nothing can bear any comparison to the pomp, and solemnity of it; for in it we have the fire; the tempest, the arch angel's voice; the trump of God; and God himself; with all his holy angels, as his attendants. Those grand displays which are made among men, are witnessed by but a few, compared with the whole of mankind; but every eye shall see the Lord, descending, and see the majestic and triumphant manner in which he shall come.

If the Lord will collect all his saints, both the living, and the dead, and convey them safely to his kingdom above,

where they shall be forever with him, and employed forever in his praise; this consideration must have amazing influence with those who can feel the weight of it, to animate them in their work, and to bear them up under the burdens, and discouragements, of life. When we can say, Here is the faith of the saints, we can add, Here is the patience of the saints. What are those light afflictions which are but for a moment, with respect to those for whom they work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! If we may be forever with the Lord, when this short life is ended, of what consequence is it whether we spend this short life in a palace or a dungeon? Duty does not require us to expose ourselves unnecessarily to evils; but to bear them submissively, when they cannot be avoided. Nothing can inspire us with submission but that hope which is as an anchor to the soul, sure, and steadfast, and if we can hear our Divine Savior say, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven; we shall see, that It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly watch, for the salvation of the Lord.

Let us however not deceive ourselves, in judging of our own case. As we may be baptised with water without being baptised with the Holy Ghost; so we may have a visible standing among God's people, without being the people of God. It is those who are dead in Christ, and those who are so much like St. Paul, that in his description of them he reckons himself in their number, that will be received by their Lord, when he shall come to gather his children into the place which he has prepared for them, in the mansions of his heavenly Father.

As we shall probably die much as we live, it is of importance that we diligently inquire, whether we have any reason to think, that the world has been crucified unto us, and we unto the world. That we cannot serve two masters is plain from our Savior's declaration, and sufficiently plain from the nature of the case. If this world has not lost much of its attraction in our view of it, it is because we have never opened our eyes upon the glories of a brighter world. Our calculation should be according to the following passage of the apostle; It is a faithful saying; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; If we

suffer we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us. If our hearts are still alive to all the things which charm the natural man, and in an equal degree; our hope, if we entertain one, is only a delusion, and the sooner we rid ourselves of it, the better will it be.

The passage which we are attending to, brings not into view the condition of the wicked. But they will rise in their order, though it will be to shame, and everlasting contempt. Are we not interested in the consideration of their sad case? May it not be our own; and can we be unconcerned, when things of infinite importance are at stake! Shall sufferings that must have a speedy termination, be regarded with horror; and shall the endless sufferings of a hopeless world, be passed over with a slight notice! This is commonly the case; but what infatuation does it betoken. It may however, be thought, if not said, as it was said in the days of Ezekiel, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come; and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. How far off the coming of the Lord may be when he shall come to raise the dead, and to judge the world, is known only to himself. But as the day of death will settle every thing in relation to our condition, it is essentially the same as if upon that day, the Lord should actually make his appearance in the clouds of heaven. Now, can any one say that that day is far distant, when life, at the longest, is but a vapor, and a dream? Let each one ask himself, as Pharaoh asked Jacob, How old art thou; and measuring the time which may belong to life, by that which is actually passed, let a fair estimate be formed. Were this to be our practice, should we not soon be disposed to say, Arise, let us go hence.

SERMON V.

HOW WOMEN MAY LABOR IN THE GOSPEL; AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE HELPED.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 3.

*And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women
which labored with me in the gospel.*

WHEN God has a work to be done, he can raise up men to do it, and furnish them with qualifications; and he can cause the efforts of the most violent opposers to further his own designs.

Saul of Tarsus appeared very unlikely to become a christian and an apostle, when he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; and Philippi, where this same man, afterwards engaged in the best cause, was so shamefully treated, appeared a very unpromising spot, when he first visited it, upon which to erect a flourishing christian church. But all this, we know was brought about in due time. That power which removed the scales from the eyes of the blind persecutor, implanted a holy zeal in the heart where furious passions had been accustomed to reign; and the same power, by converting Lydia, the jailer, and others, formed a company to advocate the truth, where Satan had maintained almost undisturbed authority. His Philippian brethren were so regular in their conduct, and evidenced so strongly their sincerity, that St. Paul was greatly comforted on their account, and gave thanks to God upon every remembrance of them.

Though the church at Philippi equalled, and perhaps exceeded any other of which we have an account, it had, as we find, something of imperfection belonging to it. Between Euodias and Syntyche, two female members of distinction, from some cause not stated, and probably not of sufficient consequence to be mentioned, there was a coolness of affection, if indeed, the variance was not manifested in indecorous, uncharitable, and harsh speeches; and in acts of conduct, negatively, or positively, inconsistent with their profession; and with the near relation which they sustained towards each other, as members of the church of Christ; and situated in the same place. Without undertaking to justify either of them in an affair which allowed of no justification, and without attempting to determine to which of the two the greatest share of blame belonged, the apostle addressed them both in the language of charity, and tenderness, and said, I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. He then addressed some one, whom he called a true yoke-fellow; but whether the husband of one of these women, or some faithful minister of that place, we are not informed, and entreated him to help those women; testifying that they had helped him in his ministerial work, and expressing a belief, amounting to assurance, that their names, as well as the names of Clement, and that of others, who had labored with him, were written in the book of life.

With these introductory remarks the passage chosen as the theme of discourse is brought forward at this time, with a view of pointing out several ways in which women may labor in the gospel, or be instrumental of doing good; and also to suggest the duty, and importance, of helping them in the business.

When God made our race male and female, he intended, that both sexes should inhabit the same world, and live in the same society; and each should have an appropriate sphere and possess and exert, an influence in its connection with the other. That the influence of the female sex has ever been great with the other, is apparent from circumstances; and facts, too numerous to be collected; and though this influence, independently of its consequences by the

intervention of a Savior, was very unhappily employed in the garden of Eden, much good has undoubtedly resulted from it, in a multitude of instances. Godliness is the prime qualification for men and women, and without it all other things, much as they may excite attention, and be coveted are but tinsel charms.

To understand the good that women may effect we must take into consideration the unmarried state; and the state of wedlock.

Titus was directed to exhort young men to be sober minded; and as a second cause, perhaps nothing could be more influential to bring about the object of this exhortation, than for young persons, of the other sex to discountenance sin in every way in which it is manifested; and to avoid, as much as possible, all connection with those who are addicted to sinful practices. Were profanity, intemperance, debauchery, and open infidelity, to be frowned upon, in every reputable female circle; and were such as are characterized by either of these things, to be driven for company to their own sex, or to females as unprincipled, and abandoned as themselves, a reformation would at once be effected, in morals at least; if not in heart, and very widely extended. Men despise and forsake those women whom they have been instrumental in seducing; and from this well known fact it is apparent, that however at variance a man's own practice may be with virtue, he will esteem others in proportion as they possess it; and especially prize the company of those females who give evidence in the whole of their deportment, that they fear God, and intend to live in the faithful observance of all his commandments.

Were any thing to be said against card playing, dancing, and what we commonly understand by parties, it might be charged to a rustic uncultivated mind, and to a cynic disposition; and a plea for these amusements might be grounded on the supposition, that these must be continued, or society must be broken up; and then a monastic life would succeed to that life of pleasant intercourse which is now generally maintained. But since drawing conclusions without premises is like leaping in the dark, let us consider

that if this supposition be well founded, either these amusements are consistent, not only with the christian character, but also with the actual exercise of faith, and its kindred graces in the soul; or that christianity is ill adapted to our world, and, that the more the effects of it are experienced, the more things will be turned upside down, and the more dismembered, and chaotic, the human condition will appear. It is in vain to say, that many, who profess to be the followers of Christ, advocate such amusements, and indulge themselves in them; for many too of this description, though they may not advocate swearing, or intemperate drinking, practise both. The record of Christ's life is indeed concisely written; but if it were sufficiently copious to embrace every particular, an example could not be found for any thing, which deserves no higher name than amusement. ~~The~~ The very persons also, who have spent much of life at the card table, the ball room, or in parties, which they once thought innocent and improving, now in great numbers, bear their united testimony, in the most decided manner, against these things, as a waste of that time which ought to be redeemed; and every moment of which, is wanted to prepare for eternity. So much more rational and refined are the pleasures of religion than the pleasures of sin, that if we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we can no more be induced, while such is our state of mind, to try other methods of gratification, than he who is seated at a table of delicacies, can be induced to rise from it, and fill himself with the offal which is thrown into a kennel of hounds. It is only when the animal gets the ascendancy over the intellectual part that, we walk through dry places, seeking rest and finding none; and wander far and labor hard, for that to make us happy, which if we ever find it, must be found in God.

So confident am I with regard to this point, that I hesitate not to say, that with that divine blessing, without which no good purpose can be effected, it is within the power of the youthful part of the female sex to give a new direction to the youthful part of the other sex, and to lay a plan of intercourse which would be mutually, and forever, advantageous. Experiments have often been made when chance

for success was by no means, so great, and when the object contemplated, was by no means so important.

What is here suggested is from friendship; and should any one agree with me, she can suggest it to a second, and thus, it can go around until something of consequence shall grow out of it, as the temple of Jerusalem may be traced back to the thought which occurred to David, while musing upon his own splendid palace, and comparing it with the curtains within which the ark, the cymbal of divine presence, was lodged.

How amiable does the daughter of Jephthah appear, whom piety reconciled to the rash vow which he had made, and which a false sense of duty compelled him to perform. Instead of remonstrating in this very trying situation, or begging her life, or attempting to escape, she said, with all the composure and affection imaginable, My father! if thou have opened thy mouth unto the Lord do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth. Having passed the two months granted to her request, in going up and down upon the mountains; time, undoubtedly, well spent in devotional employments, she returned and yielded herself a victim to her father, whose faith must have been severely tried in the execution of his vow.

That this pious young female was held in high esteem is evident from this custom which is recorded, That the daughters of Israel went yearly, to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year. How the youth of the other sex were affected, we are not told; but it is easy, and natural, to conclude, that that was a time of general seriousness, and reformation.

Honorable mention is made of four unmarried daughters of Philip the evangelist, who, beside partaking of the piety which distinguished their father, were also endued with a spirit of prophecy, and, undoubtedly, were instrumental in doing much good at Cesarea.

When Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances, or with some bodily manifestation of religious joy, such as would consist with singing a song of praise to God for the wonderful deliverance ex-

perienced at the red sea. This was an event deserving to be celebrated; and so real, and so great, was the holy pleasure felt upon the occasion, that no desire was entertained to substitute any thing else in its place.

From a single life we will now turn to view woman in the interesting relation which she sustains when united to a husband.

When God had created Adam, and placed him in the garden of Eden, under such a law as was suited to his condition, he said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him. If the man was to derive advantage from his companion, who was to be bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh, the reason is obviously this, that she would be help meet to him, or conduct towards him in such a manner, that his condition would be better for the variation of it. Had our original mother never done any thing more commendable than to eat the forbidden fruit, and tempt her husband to follow her example, the case would be dark, and doubtful; and it would be difficult to determine what Adam had gained by changing a life of solitude for a life of society. Whether a woman be considered as connected with a religious husband, or with one of an irreligious character, it is true, that a prudent wife is from the Lord; and that possessing religion, and exercising it, she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

To have some conception of what a religious man must suffer from a companion differently disposed, we may refer to real cases; and of these the cases of Job, and of Samson, will serve as specimens. The trials of Job, all things taken into consideration, probably, were never exceeded, if they were ever equalled. From a state of extraordinary wealth, and honor, he was reduced to the most abject condition; deprived of his children; covered with a loathsome bodily malady; reproached by his friends as a hypocrite; and subjected to the malicious temptations of the devil. Did he not need the soft soothing comforting language of piety in this time of his distress, instead of that which is harsh, and chafing, as the potsherd with which he scraped himself; when he sat in the ashes, covered with boils, from the sole of his foot, unto his crown.

Then was especially the time for her who occupied the place of a helpmeet, to bring up to the recollection of her afflicted, and distressed partner, the faithfulness, and compassion of God; the importance of patience, submission, and prayer; and the precious nature of those promises to the righteous, from which they may confidently expect light to arise in the darkness; and good to result from every thing; the severest chastisements, and scourgings, not excepted. But was this the method which Job's wife adopted, upon an occasion so imperiously calling for it? Her words are written in a book, and could not be more legible, if they were graven with an iron pen, and laid in the rock forever. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity! curse God and die. What impiety is here expressed; and with what aggravations is it attended, from the consideration that she had lived from her early days with a man distinguished for godliness; and that she had been so recently and so heavily corrected, in the loss of all her children! A speech so fraught with inconsideration, so daring, and so dreadful, must have pierced the heart of Job, like a sharp thorn thrust into his flesh.

Nor was Sampson's wife less vexatious to him, though even she was outdone in mischief by that Delilah with whom he was afterwards, still more unjustly connected. Both these women used all their artifice to betray him to the Philistines, his personal enemies, and the enemies of Israel, and of God. With these sad instances, that we may have a clearer view of this matter, let us contrast two others from the sacred history.

One of them shall be Sampson's mother. The angel of the Lord, who would give no farther account of himself than to say, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret, that is wonderful? appeared to her, and communicated the intelligence, quite unexpected, that she should bear a son; and gave her directions how to conduct, and what to do with the child, when it should be born. All this, like an affectionate wife, she communicated to her husband, informing him, that the man of God, for such she supposed him to be, was very terrible, and that his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God. To

the whole account Manoah, her husband, gave the fullest credit, and entreated the Lord that this messenger might be sent again. As this was the prayer of faith, and contained nothing but what was altogether consistent, and important, the same glorious being made a second appearance to the woman as she was sitting alone in the field. Desirous that her husband should have an opportunity to see and hear what she had once and again witnessed herself, she made haste and ran to him; and he followed her, little thinking, that he was going to meet that angel whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship!

What had been before told to his wife was now repeated to Manoah, and he, ignorantly though with much hospitality, proposed to detain the angel, who appeared in the form of a man, until he could prepare a kid for his entertainment; or perhaps to sacrifice to him. The reply of the angel to this proposal is, in substance, not very much unlike the reply of the same exalted being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, to the young ruler who in his address called him Good master. Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread, and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering thou must offer it unto the Lord. Upon this Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord. The flame ascended from off the altar, and with it rose the angel; and so astonished were Manoah, and his wife, that they fell with their faces to the ground.

Manoah appears now to have been convinced that it was no man, nor any created angel that they had seen, but the Lord of men, and of angels: and, as when Moses witnessed the awful scenes of mount Sinai, so terrible was the sight as to make him exceedingly fear and quake; so Manoah was filled with the like consternation, and, said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God! But his wife said unto him, being more composed, as seems to be characteristical of women, in circumstances of peculiar trial, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things; nor would he have told us such things as these. The reasoning of the woman was much better founded, and much more conclu-

sive than that of her husband; and in every stage of this business, and we have reason to think generally, she was of essential service to him.

The celebrated woman of Shunem is the other whom I had in view to mention. The first time that the prophet Elisha, so far as the record informs us, was at the place where she lived, she, with much entreaty prevailed upon him to partake of some refreshment at her house, and probably, insisted upon it, that he should make that his station whenever he was there, for as often as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

Upon acquaintance she had a high veneration for his character, and proposed to her husband that such accommodations should be furnished, as would comport with the state of mind, and with the office of Elisha; saying, Let us make a little chamber I pray thee on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candle-stick, and it shall be when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither; prefacing her proposal with this reason, Behold now I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. To reward her for her pious conduct, the prophet was directed to inform her that she should embrace a son, she being at that time childless. The event foretold was accomplished at the appointed season, and doubtless to the great joy of the woman and her husband.

But when the child was grown sufficiently to be able, he went out to his father to the reapers, and being suddenly taken with a complaint in his head, he was carried back to his mother and at noon of the same day, he died in her arms. Instead of spending her time in unavailing lamentations, she laid her dead son upon the bed; and without communicating the melancholy tidings to her husband, who appears to have been quite unapprehensive that the child would die, she requested him to send her one of the young men, and one of the asses, that she might run to the man of God and return again. He inquired her reason for going, as it was neither new moon, nor sabbath, and therefore not the customary time, for consulting the seer; and she, without explaining the matter, gave a general answer, which was satisfactory.

Elisha saw her at a distance, and sent Gehazi to ask if it was well with her, her husband, and child; to which she replied in the affirmative. As she was intent however, upon seeing Elisha, she pressed forward, and had an interview with him, the consequence of which was the restoration of her son to life.

This woman appears to great advantage, from the short sketch that is given of her character. She delighted in the company of the godly, to whom she wished to furnish every necessary and convenience, avoiding all ostentation, as appears from the simple furniture of the prophet's room; and she evidently had the victory over the world, for in a season of trouble, to which there are few parallels, she acknowledged the way of the Lord to be equal, considering every thing under his government to be well.

Though she is called a great woman, and though nothing is to be seen in her husband but his piety, nothing is to be seen in her, towards him, that is supercilious, and usurping; but all her behavior, so far as we have an account of it, was affectionate, and respectful. Can any one doubt whether this couple lived together in such a manner that their prayers were not hindered?

But in such a world as this, that lies in wickedness, it is not unfrequently the case, that women are connected with ungodly men; with idlers; liars; drunkards; swearers; cheats; or scoffers; or with those who unite many bad properties, and practise sin in a variety of ways. That woman must be very abandoned herself whose patience would not be tried, and whose heart would not be grieved, in consequence of such a connexion.

But what is to be done to remedy evils of this description; or to render a condition thus unhappily circumstanced less calamitous? Though the experiment may often have been tried, was it ever known to succeed, for a woman to harangue and upbraid her husband, setting before him his criminality, and the shame and wretchedness to be expected from his course of conduct, to himself, and his family? On the contrary, have not thousands in all probability, been confirmed in practices of vice, and led on to destruction, by attempts, made in this way, to reclaim them?

Our duty, whatever may be our place, is to be learned from the Word of God. Particular directions are to be found for such a case as this now under consideration. Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. These words were penned by a man, but he was an apostle, and inspired, and the sentiment is essentially, the same with what Christ communicated in his sermon on the mount, addressing both sexes, and persons of different ages. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Among the proverbs of Solomon this is worthy of special attention in regard to the case before us. By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. A question of St. Paul should ever be in the recollection of persons in the marriage state. For what knowest thou O wife whether thou shalt save thy husband? and how knowest thou O man whether thou shalt save thy wife? This is a very desirable, and important object to be brought about, and the means best adapted, should be used to accomplish it.

It is not intended, that when one of the parties in this connexion, lives and dies in sin, it is to be charged altogether to the irreligion and mismanagement of the other; for many a woman has been in the situation of the wife of Phinehas; and many a man has been in the situation of Job; so far as the dissimilarity is concerned of the two united. But each one should consider, that with a divine blessing, a reformation if needed, may be effected in the other; and each one should farther consider, that a divine blessing cannot be expected upon such measures as are in opposition to duty. As young persons of the two sexes, when contemplating a lasting connexion, are inclined by nature to the most conciliating conduct towards each other; so the same conduct ought to be continued after the connexion is formed; and religion furnishes weighty motives for the continuance of it.

Though a woman may sometimes gain an inglorious victory in a contest with her husband, she will always come

off more than a conqueror, by the exercise of that condescension which is among the first of her charms; for a meek and quiet spirit is an ornament of great price in the sight of God. Whoever has carefully attended to the scriptures, must be sensible what mode of practice is recommended and enjoined for women to adopt, whatever may be the character of their husbands. Let the wife see that she reverence her husband. If a conversation, or demeanor, mild and respectful, has in repeated instances failed of its intended effect; since in the scriptures, we find nothing said in favor of the contrary course, we may be sure, it allows of no justification, but must invariably, tend to make a bad case a worse one. If a man so depraved, as to be proof against all the promises and threatenings of the Word of God, may he be brought off from his iniquity, by the charms of religion, displayed in the conduct of his wife; and such is the case supposed by St. Peter; here is, certainly, an object of sufficient magnitude, to engage the attention of all who have an opportunity, in this way, to do good.

We will now survey women in another sphere of great consequence, in which they may have a part to act, I mean that of a mother. Both parents in the education of a family occupy a wide field of labor, and the profit will generally be, as in other cases, in proportion to the faithfulness, and assiduity, with which the labor is performed. The mother, however, from the circumstance of her being commonly with her children, in the period of life most favorable for impressions to be made upon the mind, possesses advantages, to which her companion, from the difference in his business, is a stranger. How much is it to be lamented, that such a multitude of immortal beings, instead of being trained up by those who have the care of them, in the way that they should go, are suffered to take a spontaneous growth; as weeds vegetate in the rank soil of the sluggard, for want of that cultivation, which with few exceptions, is followed with a crop. A father's unconcern about the best interest of those to whom he is a father, is shameful and criminal in a high degree; but a mother's neglect appears still more horrible, because less frequent, and because from female tenderness and affection, more may well be expected.

It is said of Ahaziah, grandson of Jehoshaphat, whose mother was Athaliah, that He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; and strange as it may seem, this is assigned as the reason, for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.

The mother of Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, though she might not be so bad a woman as Athaliah, was equally indisposed to give any good instruction to her son. When engaged with the children of Israel, headed by Deborah, and Barak, in that battle which led to his destruction, his delay excited much attention, and some anxiety for his return, among his friends; for we are told that the mother of Sisera looked out at a window and cried, through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Her wise ladies answered her, yea she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped; have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needle work, of divers colors of needle work, on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? From such folly and stupidity in the mother, what but folly and stupidity, could be expected in her children?

How different was Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and how different was the result of her conduct! Having obtained a son in answer to prayer, she had no sooner weaned him than she carried him to Shiloh, where the tabernacle of God was at that time; and where the stated worship was performed, and left him under the care of Eli the high priest; saying, that this child being given to her petition, she lent him to the Lord: intending that his life should be spent in his service.

What was the name of David's mother, I believe we are not informed; but if she had not been a pious woman, and greatly instrumental in inclining him to things of piety, he would not have said, as he does in more than one place, in an address to God, I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid. We have it from David himself, that God taught him from his youth, and that God was from his youth the object of his trust; and his rencounter with Goliath of Gath, confirms the declaration.

St. Paul bears testimony to the faith of the mother, and grandmother, of Timothy; and that this his spiritual son had from a child known the holy scriptures. He had undoubtedly his early religious instruction from his mother, and perhaps in part from his grandmother; for his father being a Greek, or an uncircumcised Gentile, probably turned his mind to other matters; and knowing nothing of the value of religion himself, he had no inducement to recommend it to the acceptance of his son.

When we call to mind that these three men have entered upon that holy and everlasting rest which remains for the people of God; and that vast multitudes will be found among the redeemed, to whose salvation their labors will be seen to have contributed; we must be sensible that their pious mothers spent their time to great advantage, in instilling into their minds in childhood, the knowledge and love of the truth.

Having said some things of young women, of married women, and of mothers; we will now lay aside these distinctions, and attend to the opportunity which women, of different ages, and in different circumstances enjoy, for laboring in the gospel, or for promoting the good of the world. Deeds of charity they can all perform; and to such deeds they are, generally, more disposed than the other sex.

When Christ was upon earth, and had not where to lay his head, he experienced, in a high degree, the hospitality of women. He appears to have been frequently at Bethany, in the house where Martha, Mary, and Lazarus lived. St. Luke tells us, that he went through every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; adding, that the twelve were with him. And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. A company of women prepared spices and ointments, to honor the body of their crucified Lord. These were the women which followed him from Galilee, among whom was Mary Magdalene; and they were, probably, all his constant attendants; and who were more likely

to be the persons, than those who have just been mentioned by name?

It will be remembered through time, nor will it be forgotten in eternity, that when the people were casting their gifts into the treasury at Jerusalem, for the purpose of defraying some religious expense; though many that were rich, cast in much, they were all outdone in their charity by a poor widow, who trusting to the providence of God for the supply of her future wants, cast in all that she had, two mites being all her living.

We have only to read the apostolic writings to see that as women ministered to their Lord, so they continued to be helpers to his faithful and needy servants; who acting under his commission spent a laborious life in preaching the gospel.

Women have in every age, and probably, in every place, where there has been a church, composed a great majority of the professors of religion; and it is no more than an acknowledgment due to the sex to say, that with the exception of a very few, whom infidelity has rendered more insensible than the sea monsters of which Jeremiah gives us an account, they have, in proportion to their means, done the most that has been done, for the welfare of their fellow creatures, in body, and soul.

Women are now, very extensively forming into societies, and uniting their efforts, to feed the hungry; clothe the naked; reform the vicious; and employ the indolent; as well as to contribute to the education of those, who desirous of the work of the ministry, without help, would find it an unattainable object; to put bibles into the hands of the destitute; and to aid the missionary cause, that the gospel may be preached in places where, from poverty, disunion, or some other preventive, the people are not supplied with public teachers of religion.

As I know not to give flattering titles, I beseech the fair part of the creation to be upon their guard, lest they should be exalted above measure, by the commendations, voluntary or extorted which are bestowed upon them in consequence of this affair; but ever to keep their thoughts fixed upon those words in St. John's letter to the Elect Lady and

her children, Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. As it is often true of men, so it may be sometimes true of women, that they do things, good in themselves, from a spirit of ostentation, which ought to be done from a better motive. To counteract the deceiver, who wishes to have it thought that those are good works, which have no connexion with good intentions, would it not be advisable to form a resolution, and abide by it, that in all instances, what is gratuitously bestowed, shall be the fruit of manual labor, or levied by a tax upon the superfluities of life. When Ornan, the Jebusite, generously offered to give to David the place of his threshing floor to build an altar on unto the Lord, together with the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; David, with no less magnanimity, refused the present, and said, Nay but I will verily buy it for the full price, for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

So much time has been taken up in pointing out the ways in which women may labor in the gospel, or be instrumental of doing good, that the subject will be brought to a close, by suggesting a few things respecting the duty and importance of helping them in the business.

We are not disposed to afford help in any way, if we are not disposed to approve of the object, and to countenance those who undertake to accomplish it. Much of sarcasm and sneer, is spoken and written, to bring into disrepute and to frustrate those female associations which are formed at this day, with a view of furthering the interest, and building up the kingdom of that Redeemer, who condescended to be born of a woman. But the object of their associations is a noble one; the same that engages and engrosses the attention of the angels; those ministering spirits who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

What is the clearing of the earth of its encumbering forests; and the adorning of it with the works of art and ingenuity, compared with the subduing of savage nature, and the building up of a kingdom of righteousness in the hu-

man heart, where nothing before had appeared but a luxuriant growth of folly and iniquity? However important it may be, understanding the language in a literal sense, that the crooked should be made straight, and the rough places plain, it is vastly more important, to have this brought about in a spiritual manner; so that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and that all flesh shall see it together!

If it should be thought, that women are out of their sphere in attending to this business, it would be well for those by whom such an opinion is entertained to recollect, that when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene; and that it was from the women who had visited the sepulchre, that the apostles received the first information of his resurrection. Another particular, worthy of being remembered is this, that upon that memorable day of pentecost, of which we have an account, when some of the spectators foolishly and wickedly spent their breath in mocking, Peter lifted up his voice, and informed them that what they witnessed was not the effect of drunkenness, as they pretended to suppose, but a fulfilment of a prophecy of Joel, which he cited to them. And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters, shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophecy.

Though upon the day of pentecost this prophecy began to be fulfilled, much time may be taken up even from the present period, for the full accomplishment of it, since the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. It is easy to gather from this passage, that though women have ordinarily done more than their proportion, they may be expected, in the last days, either with miraculous gifts, or in consequence of some unusual excitement, to come forward, in a manner consistent with the modesty of their sex, as advocates for the cause of Christ.

Instead of employing the tongue to counteract the benevolent operations of women, it is incumbent upon the other sex to speak favorably, of their promptitude and zeal;

and to beseech the God of all grace, to guide them by his counsel, and to crown with success, whatever they undertake for the honor of his name. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much; and this sentiment, thus generally expressed by the apostle, is as true in this particular case as in any other. Those who have the prayers of their brethren have their help.

But, perhaps the apostle in beseeching him, whom he calls true yoke fellow, to help those women who had labored with him in the gospel, had reference among other things, to some pecuniary aid which their circumstances might require. What particular purpose they had to accomplish, to which their means were inadequate, we are unable to say. It seems that their exertions so far exceeded those of ordinary cases, as to render it suitable for the apostle to give them publicity in his letter.

Though I should not doubt, in general, the ability of women to procure the sum which is agreed upon in their several societies to be requisite; it is no less the duty of their husbands, parents, or other friends, to see to it that they be supplied, without inconvenience, or hardship to themselves.

Should men, in any instance, suppose contributions of this kind like casting bread upon the waters, let them chide their own unbelief and remember, that even in such a case there is encouragement; for in a spiritual, and in a natural sense, they might expect to find it after many days. If we have any thing to spare, we are not afraid to trust a man who can secure to us the discharge of his obligation; and upon this principle we may safely proceed to lay out something in the business of religion, for he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.

Without undertaking to devise ways and means, and to dictate the course to be pursued, permit me to suggest, that should there be any females, too poor to become members of a society composed of their sex, who have yet a disposition to unite in this business with their sisters, a small fund, sufficient for this purpose, might be raised, without bringing damage upon any one.

In compliance with a request of my female friends in this place, who are formed into a society, this discourse is

delivered, and the sabbath was chosen for the time, because most convenient for myself; and because upon the sabbath the audience is usually larger than at other times.

If a greater latitude of interpretation has been given to the text than might be expected by the generality of readers, it is hoped that it has not been considered as containing any thing which is not sound doctrine; nor wrested from that meaning which may be fairly put upon its phraseology.

What is bestowed in charity derives its importance to those who bestow it, from the object which they aim at; for should they bestow all their goods to feed the poor, and even display a martyr's zeal in the cause which they espouse; and still be destitute of that love to God which is the fulfilling of the law, and the ground work of all real love to mankind, they would be nothing more than whited sepulchres.

I hope that we shall all realize the importance of having our hearts right with God; and that those to whom this discourse has some special reference, will be able to say, with the confidence of Nehemiah, The God of heaven he will prosper us.

When Philippi was a part of satan's kingdom, there were a few women who met by the river's side for prayer; and though their disadvantages in attending to this business were of every kind, we have reason to think that the great change afterward effected among the people, may be traced back to their prayers as the means in providence to bring it about. Let the example of Philippi be followed in this place, for here the benefit is much needed. In the words of Ogilvie let me conclude.

Ye fair, by nature formed to move,
O praise the eternal Source of love,
With youth's enlivening fire:

Let age take up the tuneful lay,
Sigh his blessed name, then soar away,
And ask an angel's lyre.

SERMON VI.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

EXODUS xxxii. 6.

And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

THE account which we have of the descent of the Lord upon mount Sinai, when he gave the law to Moses, is most awfully sublime. The scene described is without a parallel; yet bearing some resemblance to what will take place when God shall come to judge the world.

The people were thrown into consternation, and even Moses said, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has informed us, I exceedingly fear and quake. Moses was called up to the top of the mount to receive his instructions; and the two tables of the law, and continued there fasting for forty days. In his absence, the people grew weary of waiting for him, and the business to which they were called was too spiritual for their gross conceptions, and desires. They, therefore, pretended that they knew not what was become of Moses, and called upon Aaron to make them gods to go before them.

If any opposition was made by Aaron to this clamorous demand of the multitude, it was too feeble, and too unworthy of him to deserve a place in the records. By requiring the golden ear-rings to melt down to make the calf, which was to be the object of their worship, he imposed indeed upon them an act of self denial, which he might hope would frustrate their design. But that he proceeded with-

out any reason which would justify him, appears from the miserable account which he gave of the matter to Moses.

After the molten calf was formed, and the stupid idolaters had cried out, These be thy gods O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt! Aaron built an altar before it, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. This was a very acceptable proclamation, and the people readily complied with it, bringing their burnt offerings, and their peace offerings; and having offered sacrifice to the idol, they closed the business by indulging in feasting and sport, according to the representation of our text.

In this condition of things, Moses was ordered down from the mount; saw the calf, and the dancing; and to express the indignation which he felt, he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them both at the foot of the mount. The consequences of this wicked idolatrous proceeding were very dreadful; for about three thousand fell by the hands of the Levites, who were commissioned by God as the executioners of his vengeance.

Human nature has never varied essentially, since the introduction of sin. It comported well with the sensual character of the Israelites, to have an object of worship which they could see; and a worship which required no homage of the heart; but which might unite with, and be followed by any animal indulgences, to which they might incline. Though we do not bring our burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to present a sacrifice to a molten image; if we follow nature for a guide, we are better pleased with external service, than with internal; with toleration, than with strict rules of religion; than with that commandment which is holy, and just, and good.

The Psalmist has told us, that it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. Adopting this sentiment, the first settlers of New England introduced the custom, which has been handed down to us, of observing a day of Thanksgiving, as well as a day of Fasting, annually, to be appointed by the Executive of each State. As New England is allowed to be vastly superior to the other parts of the country, in respect to morals, and religion, this custom may be viewed as having had its influence in making it so; and where this

custom has not been adopted, but sneered at, benefits may have resulted from it, by means of the connexion of the States and the intercourse of the people.

But if days set apart for thanksgiving, poorly as they have been observed, have been productive of good; what would have been the sum of good produced, had they been observed by all, as we hope and trust they have been by some. More regard, perhaps, is usually had in the preparation of the banquet, and in the use of it to the gratification of the appetite, than to the glory of him whose bounties are spread profusely on the table; and though public worship is attended by some, dancing, riding, racing, gambling, drinking, shooting, and things of the like kind, are by many, thought to be indispensable employments, for the rest of the week. Whether it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord in this way of performing the service, it is submitted to you to decide. We know that when the Israelites, in the instance under consideration, pretended to keep a feast to the Lord, his anger was most terribly manifested towards them for mingling idolatry, and festivity, with his worship.

Let us shun their evil example. Let us keep a feast to the Lord. We have nothing to do here, at this time, unless we can render unto God thanksgiving. Motives to this business are abundant and too numerous to be all mentioned; and too often brought into view, to allow of much novelty in their exhibition.

It has been repeatedly said from high authority, but it is no less a truth on that account, nor less deserving of grateful recollection, that the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places and that we have a goodly heritage. The soils of our country are various, and the climates; the productions are of many kinds, and abundant; the accommodations for intercourse, and traffic, are extraordinary; the means of subsistence, and of knowledge, are within the reach of all classes of the people; and the civil, and religious institutions, with which we are favored, would probably appear to advantage, in comparison with the best that can be found.

It is about two centuries since this land began to be peopled from Europe. How generally has war been there, and how small a proportion of the time has this land been de-

prived of the blessings of peace? Who has made us to differ? He certainly who builds up, and throws down, at his pleasure; and who holds in his hand the reins of universal government. Perhaps, from all our wars, some good has resulted.

By the war of the revolution, we know our independence was effected. In our independence we greatly glory, whether properly disposed or not; and every year, we celebrate the great event, much as we differ in political opinions. The war which raised us from dependant colonies to an independent nation, has ever been pronounced, with a very few dissenting voices, a necessary war; and being necessary, it was prospered; and being prospered, it was glorious: though the expense was great, both of treasure, and of blood.

For the war which preceded that of the revolution, there was sufficient reason; and for the result of it, we have great cause to be thankful; as has appeared more of late years than at any previous period.

This year has witnessed the interposition of Providence in our behalf, to deliver us from a war which multitudes, if not most of the people, considered unnecessary; unjust; and impolitic: and which rulers; and subjects; those who made it, and those who made opposition to it, rejoiced to see brought to a close.

For the peace which we now have, we have been called upon to keep a national Thanksgiving; and that by the voice of him who led his council to the declaration of war. So great was the blessing, in the estimation of our chief magistrate, and of the two houses of congress; that they could not wait for the time to arrive, when the State Executives, according to their custom, where there has been any such custom, would issue their proclamations, calling upon the people to render thanks to God for his mercies, including peace in the catalogue.

Such an unexpected change took place in European affairs, after our late war commenced, that it was hardly to be expected; and indeed, it was not much expected here, by the government or the people, that such a treaty of peace could be obtained as that a remnant should be saved to us, either of interest or of honor.

The nation with which we were contending, powerful against a world in arms, was much more to be dreaded when left without a single foe but ourselves; and we had reason to calculate, that the common principle of selfishness would induce her to a continuance of hostilities with us, when revenge was so easy, and her gain, and our loss, so certain.

This seems to have been the calculation of those who entertain the most unfavorable opinion of the English nation and the English government; and even those who ever thought, that the war was reluctantly begun, and reluctantly prosecuted, on the part of the nation, lately styled our enemy, had their fears, lest the principle of rectitude should prove too feeble, and ineffectual, in the councils of a triumphant and aspiring people, to admit of terms upon which even a truce could be settled.

Is it within your recollection that a peace has ever been established between two nations at war when the advantages of one over the other were so many, and so great? Has the Power which we have been in alliance with, and which was long so formidable in Europe, in one instance, done a thing of the like kind? There is but one way of accounting for an event so welcome as peace was to all; and so beyond the expectation of all, as that was when it took place. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will. If we do not adopt this sentiment, and apply it to explain this affair, we have a mystery in the fact before us. Until we can believe that water, whose natural course is downward, will, taking its own direction, run from the valleys to the tops of the hills, we cannot, consistently, suppose, that a nation, or a government, actuated by nothing but a selfish principle, will, in any case, act against itself. We must either suppose the president's call upon the people to keep a day of Thanksgiving to be without any meaning, or, we must conclude him to be impressed with the belief, that the hand of God was visible in bringing the contest to a termination.

But how was the hand of God visible in this business? Can he have an agency in human affairs, except by acting

upon, and inclining, those who are instruments in his hand, to conduct these affairs. The war under contemplation, like other things, was begun by men; carried on by men; and terminated by men. From motives of interest we can see, that the losing party, having no prospect of better success, would wish to put an end to the game which they had with ill founded hopes, and too little foresight, begun; but interested motives would have prompted to a different wish the party winning continually, and in a fair way to win all.

With all the corruption therefore, that there is in the English nation, and in the English court, we must grant, or be unreasonable, that there was some influence of heaven, to which the result, so favorable to us as a people, is to be attributed. Those who do not believe this might be inquired of why they obey the call of any magistrate of the nation, or of the state, to give thanks to God for this affair; for according to their scheme, Jehovah has had no more to do with it than Jupiter. That we ought to bring our thank offering to God for the blessing of peace is very apparent; and this blessing will appear the greater if we look back upon the war and consider some of its effects.

During the war, short as it was, thousands, it will never be known how many, came to an untimely end by the sword, or in some other manner. Whether we call the slain friends or enemies, they were our fellow creatures, immortal and accountable; taken from a state of probation to a state of retribution; and probably, many of them quite unprepared. If we take no interest in the fall of any who were not our countrymen, it may be said that thousands of them have fallen; and fallen not only into the dust, but perhaps into the pit, from which there is no rising, and in which there is no hope. Surviving friends are left in mourning; parents, widows, fatherless children, brothers and sisters; and other relatives, and connexions.

In some instances the sting of death has been peculiarly poignant in the heart of the living, in consequence of the circumstances attending it. What feeling mother do you think can ever refrain from tears, when she recollects, that her son was shot, not in the field of battle; but on his own

parade; not by the hand of an enemy; but with the muskets of his fellow soldiers, reluctantly obeying the orders of their superiors; not for a crime of the deepest die; but for deserting; cold; hungry, and pennyless. Should we fall into company with such a mother, who must be indeed a woman of a sorrowful spirit, would she not spend a long evening of winter, in giving us an account of her journey to the camp; of the arguments, and entreaties, which she used, to procure a pardon for her incautious stripling; of the hard speeches which were returned, instead of compliance or condolence; and of the anguish of the parting scene, the last farewell!

While the generation now acting on the stage shall be living, our country will be patrolled by the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; whose names are on the pension list; whose scars of honor, and whose rewards for service, will be but a meager compensation for the damage they have sustained. Who, that has a whole body, could be persuaded to set a price upon his leg, his arm, or his eye; a price which he would take, and give up either, to any one who should ask it of him. Such remnants of themselves we have many of us seen, and if we have no pity for them, we should all be quite loath to be placed under the same disadvantages.

The pecuniary expense of the war is a matter understood by all classes of the people; and it is a burden, which if not felt equally, is felt universally. We are sensible of it in what we eat, and drink and wear. A few years since the debts of our country were diminishing so fast, that the diminution held a conspicuous place in every Presidential message. But, the millions which are now charged to our account, are so many, that all hope of ever being free is taken away from this generation. Tax gatherers are so many, and taxation is so heavy, that we shall be in danger of adopting the same mode of speaking which was common among the Jews, living under the Roman government, in the time of our Savior; who mentioned publicans and sinners, together, concluding that they must form but one class.

Reviewing the calamities of the war, we shall never forget that the seat of government, dignified by the name of our political Father, was reduced to ashes. Every one has pride enough to be mortified at the recollection of an affair attended with so much humiliation. We have it from high authority that nothing like to this had ever taken place before; when an army had entered an enemy's country and taken his capital. Without criminating or excusing, let the fact be stated as it was. In the fact as in a glass we see our own prostration.

We all know, who know any thing of public matters, what claims were set up by our government; and that the war was declared, and carried on, to maintain these claims; and we all know, who know thus much, that these claims were given up when the war concluded, and disappeared, as the light dies away when the candle burns out in the socket. Whether these claims were reasonable, or unreasonable, is not now made a question; but if they were reluctantly yielded, the sacrifice was great, on the part of those who claimed; and the triumph was great on the part of those who refused. Commercial and other privileges, which we had before the war, it must be granted we lost by the war; and if they should ever be restored, they could not be considered as conditions of the peace, for the treaty of peace contained no stipulation for their restoration.

Should you inquire how peace can be a blessing if all these things are true, I would refer you to the highest authority among us; I would beg you to ask the rulers of the nation, who know all these things to be true, why they regard peace as a blessing. Would they not tell you, that our independence is preserved; that our means, though diminished, are not all gone; and, that in a case of such extreme jeopardy as ours was, when every wave was a messenger of death, we ought to rejoice, if we can get safe to land; some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship.

If a peace with Algiers has been established, upon such terms as will free us, in future, from paying tribute to that piratical Power; and secure our countrymen from becoming captives in that land, where the barbarous people cast fire-brands, arrows, and death, and say are we not in sport; it

is a matter which we ought to enter on the list of mercies, calling for gratitude at this time. It must be attributed to God, that our means at this day, have been equal to the conflict; for in former times, attempts made by the most formidable nations of Europe, against this nest of free booters have proved unsuccessful.

Our hearts must be very much depraved, if we do not rejoice in the general repose of Europe. Has there been any thing like the settled purpose, and the deliberate and harmonious movement of the nations at this time, to restore order where every thing was disjointed, and thrown back into chaos? Did not those conclude, who speculated upon passing events, taking what had been, as a rule to judge by of what was to be expected, that the confederacy, from mutual jealousy, would break up; that the bond of union would be a rope of sand; that the mountain in labor, would exhibit, at the most, but a puny production? But the result has been great and glorious; for the God of the armies of Israel was invoked, and the cause of a sinking world was put into his hands.

We are bound to condole with that nation in Europe which is suffering in consequence of the sentinels placed over her, and judged to be necessary, from the existing state of things. If this had been a favorite measure with the nations of the Confederacy, it would have been earlier adopted; if they had wished to humble and break down France, they would have left an army there in the first instance before an experiment had been made, to see how the people would manage for themselves. This nation, long engaged in war, and victorious, must contain many restless spirits, to whom no government would be acceptable; which should cherish peace, and endeavor to curb the turbulent passions of an unholy nature. These restless spirits are the disturbers, and to them must be attributed all the evils to which the community is subjected. Those who are engaged in the common occupations of life must bear their part of the burden; and though they bear it impatiently, they are probably convinced, that the general good requires the present order of things. This is the nation, we are to remember, which for a course of years, has presented the bitter cup to all

parts of the world, to which she could extend her arm. While we sympathize with her, we cannot forget the calamities which she brought upon Spain; Holland; and to say no more upon Europe generally. Let us consider her like a maniac who must be restrained to prevent his acts of violence upon others, and upon himself.

That military chieftain who has astonished the world, by his strides over it, and by his bloody thrusts upon it, has retired, a second time, to private life. May this arch seducer never again be seen in the bowers of paradise! May this hammer of the whole earth, never again be employed to dash in pieces the nations! May walls of water encompass the man whose ambition has been without bounds, until he shall know like the once haughty Nebuchadnezzar, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will! Should his exile prove like the captivity of Manasseh; should his cogitations in his solitary situation, be like those of Saul of Tarsus in Arabia; we would traverse land and sea to be witnesses to the wondrous change; to hear him, who has been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, declare himself the chief of sinners, and extol the grace of God, for opening his eyes upon a new world, and for pointing out for him a new employment. In present circumstances, let us be thankful, that he has become weak as other men; that the crown has fallen from his head, and the sceptre from his hand!

In the consideration of mercies, let us call to mind that the earth has been caused to yield her increase, so that all our real wants may find a supply. Many times have our expectations been far exceeded, and our melancholy forebodings have been as groundles, if not as wicked, as the language of the unbelieving Samaritan lord, in a time of famine; or as the language of the complaining Israelites, who said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? We have had experience enough to show us the importance of that scriptural direction, In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not the hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this, or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. If any from indolence, or distrust have left their fields untilled, that has been the conse-

quence which should have been expected; briers and thorns have occupied the ground which should have been covered with valuable fruits. Where the duty of the husbandman has been properly performed, the blessing of heaven has in general, been abundant.

It would not become us upon this occasion, to pass by unnoticed, that tempest which has been sent upon some parts of our country, and by which such extensive damage has been effected. When we reflect upon those who suffered from the tempest, and upon those who escaped its ravages, we are led back for instruction to what our Savior said respecting the Galileans, whose blood was mingled with their sacrifices; and respecting those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them. Is it because we have made an uncommonly religious use of this house of public worship, that its feeble frame was strengthened to resist the blast which prostrated the sanctuary of some other people? Is it because that our property has been more than ordinarily devoted to the service of God, that while the furious blast swept away much, if not all, from some, we were permitted to retain our possessions? Though our situation is high and airy, exposed to every wind that blows, we have no damage to complain of; we have sustained no loss, worthy of being mentioned.

It has been a favorite object with some, to have every thing produced in this country which is consumed by the people. The chief advocate for this scheme has spoken both for, and against it; and therefore we cannot tell in which scale to look for the preponderance of his wisdom, nor for the sum of his wishes.

The question is before the community for consideration; and arguments of weight are to be found on both sides. Did our population as much exceed our territory, as our territory exceeds our population, we should not be long in agreeing upon a verdict. Our manufacturing experiments have been so successful, and attended hitherto with so little evil, that we are, with propriety, called upon to mention this matter among the things which constitute our prosperity. As gradual changes in the habits of a people are not so dangerous as sudden alterations, for which no preparation

has been made; and as there are always in a community men fitted for one employment, and good for nothing in any thing beside; so the time may come, when a manufacturing interest established upon a broad scale among us, may not be injurious, but beneficial to the body of the nation.

Commerce in our situation has been proved to be of vital importance. Before the war commerce was obstructed by the acts of our government, and after hostilities commenced and these acts were repealed, our shore fell into the custody of the fleets that blockaded it; so that in these times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country. Now the scene is changed, Commerce has revived, and with it the nation is reviving. Our attention will soon be called to an account of the sums received into the treasury; and it will appear, that these sums are to a great amount. Whether or not it will be thought expedient, by the council managing for us, to lighten the burdens under which we stagger and complain, cannot now be determined; but it is certain were it not for the revenue arising from commerce, any petition for redress of grievances which might be presented, would be treated like the request of the Israelites to Rehoboam. Our expenses are very great, and they must be provided for in some way. Let us therefore take grateful notice of the goodness of God in prospering our business on the sea; since in present circumstances, we may calculate upon this business, if not as a source of wealth to this generation, yet as a help exceedingly needed in our case of difficulty.

Health we all consider as a very great blessing. Of sickness and death, we have a natural abhorrence. Though every year brings sickness and death with it, the past year has, perhaps, been as favorable in this respect as the average of years. We can recollect, when the pestilence which walketh in darkness, made wide havoc in our country; sweeping vast multitudes into eternity, and very sensibly thinning the population of our largest sea-port towns. Graves could not be dug for such a mass of putrid flesh; but the bodies were thrown into pits, made capacious for

their reception. In various instances the probability is, that children have been supported upon alms, to whom, had their parents lived an estate would have descended; and perhaps some are now passing under a name very different from that of their parents, because it cannot be ascertained who their parents were. The instances of sickness and of death among us, have been few during the year which we are looking back upon, compared with what we have experienced.

Can we not say, without having a party spirit imputed to us, that we are bound to be thankful that the government of this commonwealth is lodged in the hands of men who so prudently conduct its concerns. Those must be acknowledged to be good rulers, who regard the welfare of all those over whom their commission and influence extend; and who, in all their appointments and removals of men acting under them, calculate not upon an increase of popularity to themselves, but upon the probable advantageous result to the public.

Leaving others unmentioned, he who is at the head of our state affairs, is a rare instance. How many times has he been called to the same office; and that in a period of time peculiarly critical, when the conflict of parties has been violent, and when each party has resisted almost unto blood? Sharp and poisoned arrows have been shot at his heart, and his head; but he has neither been killed nor wounded. Collected and composed he leaves it to others to carry on the fight, and hardly proceeds so far as to say to those who would displace him; Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also; For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise; For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage; if a man devour you; if a man take of you; if a man exalt himself; if a man smite you on the face. Having tried him for several years, the people tried to do without him; but were convinced by sad experience, that they had no man like minded, who would naturally care for their state. Would any man, fit for the office, at his time of life, and with his reputation, from any motive but a sense of duty, forego the pleasures of his sequestered condition, to take upon himself a load of public cares; always irksome,

but now more so than common? When the mariner leaves the unruffled port for the stormy ocean; it is not because he would rather plough the billows which run high as the mountains than lie at anchor by the shore; but because he anticipates the gain for which he is willing to risk the consequences of the voyage.

We hear from various places abroad, that God is appearing in his glory to build up Zion. Great additions have been made to the Church of Christ in different parts of our land; and in some instances, it has been a strange work; nothing like it having ever been seen before among the people. Colleges, and other seminaries of learning, have witnessed the out pouring of the Spirit; and many of the rising generation, who will be called to fill conspicuous places, have experienced that change of heart which will qualify them for usefulness. Religion has answered a valuable purpose without learning; and it is always to be preferred to learning without religion; but when both can go together, it is very desirable that they should. If it would rejoice us to be assured that our public coffers were filled to the brim; it ought far more to fill us with joy, if multitudes of our fellow creatures, and of our countrymen, have obtained the pearl of great price, the one thing needful. All things which perish with the using, are insufficient to bring us contentment. For that we must have godliness.

As we are required to pray, that the kingdom of God may come, and his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven; we should be thankful for the promise, that such a state of things shall be accomplished. Referring to the future condition of the Church we may say with peculiar propriety and emphasis, Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation; a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers, and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. The rulers of the darkness of this world, shall be effectually overthrown. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the

saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Sin made it necessary for our first parents to leave the enchanting garden of Eden. Sin has made the world wilderness. Nothing but religion can make it rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Were the wild beasts; the owls; the satyrs, and other doleful creatures, which inhabit Babylon to be expelled, and were the city to appear again in the grandeur of ancient times; were Tyre to return to her former traffic; and were the dead sea to be drained off so as to show the beauty of the plain which it now covers; there would still be a deficiency without the knowledge and love of God.

It is impossible to determine, precisely, how long it will be before God will spread over the world the robe of righteousness; before he will engage all in his service, of every order, and rank, from him who holds the sceptre, to him who holds the plough. It is pretty well agreed, however among commentators, from dates well established, that three score years will, hardly, pass away, before the world will be prepared for the commencement of a reign of righteousness. The measures of the divine government, are now so obviously tending to this end, that he must be blind who is not sensible of it; and he must be obstinate who does not acknowledge it.

Societies under various names are formed and forming for the express purpose of rooting out vice, and of increasing virtue, by diffusing knowledge upon moral and religious subjects. Bible, and Missionary, Societies, for the benefit of the ignorant at home, and of the heathen abroad, are multiplying with such rapidity, that we are compelled to say, This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Who would think, so sordid is the human heart, and so reluctant are multitudes to support the gospel where they live, that pecuniary means would be supplied, sufficient to send religious instruction to the dark corners of the earth.

So unwilling are men in general, to be separated from their friends, and the comforts of domestic life, that we should, hardly, believe any could be found, who would vol-

intend to quit their native land forever; to cross the ocean; and to settle on some distant continent, or island, among a wild, uncultivated people having no personal interest in view, nor any object but to render service to utter strangers. So opposed is human nature to the truth, and so tenacious are idolaters to their own objects, and ways of worship, that all attempts to withdraw them from their course, and to give them a new direction, are attended with much difficulty, and hazard. The mountain of difficulties however, becomes a plain, when God calls Zerubbabel to his work. We see, that God, formerly, raised up men, who, through faith, subdued kingdoms; wrought righteousness; obtained promises; stopped the mouths of lions; quenched the violence of fire; escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Such men are now needed for this business; and God can provide them, and qualify them for himself. Into many different languages of the pagan world are the sacred scriptures already translated, and the progress made continually in this work calls for our continual praise and thanksgiving.

Are not those streaks of light in the east to be considered as harbingers of the sun, hastening to rise, and shine, upon the earth which has been wrapped up in darkness. Are not the good tidings of great joy of which the angel of the Lord spake to the shepherds, in a fair way to be proclaimed to all people? If the success should be no greater than it has been for a few years past, it would require no very considerable length of time to furnish all nations with the written word of God, in their several languages.

Already, in some instances, have the new converts from idolatry begun to be fellow workers with those who were instrumental of first bringing them to the knowledge of the truth. Such preachers of righteousness, we may expect, will be more numerous from year to year. When the Pagans, and the Jews, shall be addressed by their own kindred, by those who have labored under the same delusions with themselves, it is to be hoped, that the effects will be unusually visible, and glorious.

When you assemble in this place, my friends, for the transaction of some secular business, you attend to the articles, as they are read to you from the warrant, and your words, and actions, show that you take an interest in what is passing. We are called together at this time, by the voice of our rulers; and the proclamation is our warrant detailing the business. You see from the text how the Israelites proceeded, when, pretending to keep a feast to the Lord, they indulged their own corrupt propensities. Are you disposed to follow their example, and incur the displeasure of that God, who always regards the same thing in the same manner. The watchman has done his duty when he has warned the wicked to consider his way; and to amend his conduct.

As a candidate, twenty one years ago, I preached for the first time, upon such an occasion as this, in this place. The last sabbath made out twenty one years of my ministry. Though those of you who were then just opening your eyes upon the light of the world have now finished your minority; to older persons the period will probably, appear as short as it does to me. It becomes us all to look backward and forward, with serious reflections.

I cannot say, that during my stay among you there have been seven years of spiritual plenty. But have there not been many more years of spiritual famine, so, that the plenty which we have had is nearly forgotten, and the famine almost consumes the land.

Errors excepted, in the enumeration, two hundred and twenty two persons have been received into this church since my connexion with you; and the body now consists of one hundred and thirty members. According to this estimate, the church here, has lost in the term of twenty one years, by death, and otherwise, as many persons as then belonged to it, and ninety two members who have within that term, been added. With such a changing scene before us shall we not say of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?

Let me recommend it to you to consider how this Thanksgiving will be observed in those places where the enjoyments of religion are more prized by the people than

the dainty dishes of the feast. Let me ask you, if any of you can recollect the testimony which you gave in against the foolish, and wicked, practices, of your former life, and the declarations, that you had never found any thing but disappointment before, in all your endeavors after happiness?

SERMON VII.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

ISAIAH. ix. 6.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

How astonishingly ignorant must the Jews have been of the meaning of their own scriptures. They were certainly ignorant of the meaning of this passage, though it allows of but one consistent interpretation. But let us not wonder at their stupidity, if we have been as stupid ourselves, with all their advantages, and living under a far more luminous dispensation. As only one such child as is here described, was ever born, and as no other like him can ever be expected, Christ is evidently the object of this prophecy, and in him we may find it illustriously fulfilled.

Let it be our business at the present time, to take this prophecy into consideration, noticing briefly, each particular which it contains.

The first clause stands thus, Unto us a child is born. We know not how many worlds there are within the Universe of God; nor what is the condition of those beings who inhabit them. This earth is so inconsiderable a part of the works of God that it has been thought, by some, quite incredible, that so great an affair as the atonement of Christ, should have, for its only object, the recovery of mankind from their state of apostacy; and therefore, that if we believe any thing about it, we must believe the inhabitants of other

worlds to be in similar circumstances with ourselves; and conclude, that the atonement of Christ was intended for them as well as for us. But how can we reconcile such an hypothesis with the language of the prophet, who says, *Unto us a child is born?* If words convey any definite idea, these words mark out, distinctly, the limits of the subject to which they are applied. When we are told that any thing is for us, we hesitate not to believe, that it is for us exclusively, and, that others have no right to come in for a share.

The angel, in his communication to the shepherds, spoke in the same way with the prophet, for he said, *Unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.*

We have no account of an apostacy in any world but this except what relates to the case of the angels, who for their rebellion were cast out of heaven; and we learn from what is said by two apostles, that they have no interest in the atonement, but are altogether hopeless. In St. Jude's epistle we read, *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* In St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews we find the following passage, *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* If we should think the angels worthy of more notice than man, we should call to mind, that man was created but little lower than the angels; and we should recollect still farther the words which were addressed to Samuel, *The Lord seeth not as man seeth.* It seems to be the representation of the scriptures, that God chose this world to be the theatre, upon which to make the greatest display of himself, through the medium of the church which Christ came to establish. We might as well therefore undertake to apply a measure to infinite space as to the atonement, which is infinite in its consequences, although man was the only fallen creature whom Christ died to redeem.

How should it ashame us to think of our inattention to that great affair which is the personal interest of each one; and which called down a multitude of the heavenly host

from their high seats of felicity, to sing in strains unknown before, the praises of their Maker!

From the expression, Unto us a child is born, we learn still farther, that as Christ came into the world to be the Redeemer of man, the whole race of mankind must be considered as the object of his benevolence. If he came according to his own declaration, to seek and to save that which was lost, no one who is in a lost condition, has a right to say, he is as he is because nothing has been done on the part of God to place him in better circumstances. This is a plea which sinners often make to exculpate themselves; but it is as frivolous as it is criminal.

But to have a just view of our case, and to understand, accurately the language of the text in respect to it, we must take notice of the character of the person whose words we are considering, for he was a prophet of the Lord, and when he says, Unto us a child is born, he speaks with emphasis of himself; and of such others as are believers. There might be provision in the country, sufficient for the comfortable support of all the inhabitants, and yet if any should undertake to live without eating, and persist in their foolish purpose, they would derive no benefit from it, but must infallibly perish. In like manner the atonement of Christ is for the salvation of all, but they only will be saved, who secure to themselves an interest in it by faith.

We will now take notice of what appears next in order in our text: Unto us a son is given. Christ is here spoken of under one general term; But in other places he is represented as the Son of man; and the son of God; and this is what we are to understand in this place. He was born of a woman; possessed of a human body; sustained in the common way; and actually died: so that he was called a man by all who had opportunity to see him. He came into the world to do honor to the law which man had broken, by yielding obedience to it himself; and to make an atonement for sin by his own sufferings and death; and, of course, it was necessary, that he should assume humanity; for otherwise he would not have been in a condition to perform the work which he had undertaken to do. As Christ is called the

Son of man in the Old, and New Testament, so likewise is he in both called the Son of God.

Opinions have been various with respect to the meaning of this appellation. Some persons have supposed, that he was not the Son of God until he was born as a man into the world; and one passage of scripture seems to countenance such a supposition. The angel said to Mary, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. The Son of God however, is spoken of long before this period. Nebuchadnezzar saw one like the Son of God in the midst of the fire of the furnace into which, by his order, the three captive Jews had been cast. In the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs we find the following questions. Who hath ascended up into heaven; or descended; who hath gathered the winds in his fists; who hath bound the waters in a garment; who hath established all the ends of the earth; what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? In the second psalm are these words: Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

All these passages were penned several hundred years before the coming of Christ in the flesh; and the last more than a thousand. From all that is said of the Son of God in different parts of the bible, there appears to be the greatest propriety in calling him the eternal Son of God. It is granted, that if we have the same gross conceptions which Nicodemus had, and which all natural men have, it will appear to us absurd to speak in this way, and impossible, that the Son of God should be eternal like God the Father; for the terms, son and father, in the ordinary acceptation of them, invariably imply a difference in age. Let us however, for the present, wave fruitless objections, and suspend our curiosity; for before we get through with our subject, we shall find other particulars in connexion with this, and nearly allied to it.

This Son of man, and Son of God, is spoken of as given to us, to show us, that God was under no obligation to pro-

vide for our redemption. Beings utterly dependant as we are, can have no claim upon God, and whatever they receive, whether great, or inconsiderable, they must receive as a gift. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son; and Christ was so engaged in the work, that he gave himself voluntarily to it; for he said in the fortieth psalm, by way of anticipation, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will O my God; yea thy law is within my heart!

Of this child to be born, of this son to be given, it is said, that the government shall be upon his shoulder. As no particulars are mentioned with respect to the government to be exercised, we are to conclude it to be a government extending over all things. The church is a little community, a distinct body in the world, with Christ at the head of it, to regulate its proceedings, superintend its various concerns, and guard it from every invading foe. With such hostility of feeling has the church ever been regarded, that had not the arm of its founder been stretched out for its protection, it would long before this time have become altogether extinct. Ever since God has had a people in the world, renewed by his grace, there has been a church, but in early days it seems to have been composed of a very few individuals. Abel, the second that was born of the first human pair, was a conspicuous, and important member, and we see under what divine guidance, and influence, he conducted his affairs. After Abel was murdered, his mother seems to have considered Seth as born and appointed to supply his place. We may trace the church, and the government exercised over it, in after periods, in the families of Noah, Abraham, Lot, and Isaac; and still more extensively when from an individual a nation was formed, and placed under laws, and regulations of God's own appointment.

The preservation of Israel in Egypt was extraordinary; but their deliverance from that state of bondage was still more extraordinary, taken in connexion with all that followed, until they were established in the promised land. Through all their vicissitudes, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan; while they continued one people; and after they were divided, the church had an existence

among them, and Christ was at the head of it. Their rejection made way for the calling in of other people, and for the establishment of the church in different circumstances; and the fostering care of him who founded the church at first, has been very visible at all periods, and in every place, where it has been.

To Christ belongs, not only the government of the church, but the government of all things. Beyond the limits of this world, we cannot extend our view, so as to speak of this matter particularly; but here we have an opportunity to see, in some measure, how things have been conducted; and whoever may at any time have been king, it is very apparent who has been at all times, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Pharaoh undertook, by hard bondage, to reduce the people of Israel to such an abject state of submission, that, instead of being formidable enemies to his kingdom, they might be useful as beasts of burden, to do such drudgery as he should require of them. But was he able to carry his purpose into effect? Instead of this, did not the Israelites obtain their liberty, while he, with all his host, was drowned in the red sea? Nebuchadnezzar caused an enormous image of gold to be erected in the plain of Dura, and required all his subjects to worship it; but though the three Hebrew captives were thrown into the furnace of fire for not complying with his orders, they remained unhurt in the midst of the flames, while he, for his sins, was driven into the field with the cattle, where for a long time, his royal provision was the grass upon which the oxen fed. How different was the result of his measures from what he had anticipated! Herod, alarmed at the prophecy respecting him who was to be born king of the Jews, sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and the coasts of it, from two years old and under, that he might be sure of destroying the rival whom he so much dreaded. He failed however, of accomplishing his purpose, and died, shortly after, of excruciating, and loathsome diseases.

These instances are only specimens; for if the whole history of human affairs was before us, we should see, that the purposes of men, have invariably, been overruled, and made subservient, to the purpose of God.

The government shall be upon his shoulder, is an expression, which still farther, denotes the care with which Christ administers the government, of the church, and of the world, as a man would walk off unmolested by any load which he might thus lay upon himself.

The prophet next proceeds to declare by what name this child was to be called; and he mentions five things, which are rather descriptive of him, than the real appellations by which he has been ordinarily designated. We will take these things in their order, and the first that presents itself is Wonderful.

Whatever view we take of Christ, we shall find this name altogether appropriate. His introduction into the world was wonderful, for no one was ever born before, nor since, that could be called as he was, The seed of the woman. His childhood was wonderful. Had it been the object of the inspired penmen to gratify our curiosity, they would have given us a long detail of the childhood of Jesus Christ; but the simple narrative of his tarrying at Jerusalem, and taking his seat in the temple, with the Jewish doctors, to hear them, and to ask them questions, while his parents were anxiously looking for him, is all that we have, and all that we need, with respect to this affair; for this informs us, that All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. When I say that this narrative is all that we have of the childhood of Jesus Christ, I have not forgotten the descent, and the song, of the angels, upon the day of his birth, nor have I forgotten, that the wise men from the east brought to him their presents, gold and frankincense, and myrrh, and fell down and worshipped him; nor have I forgotten, that when his parents carried him to the temple, to do for him after the custom of the law, Simeon took him in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according unto thy word, For mine eyes have seen thy salvation: and, that Anna, a prophetess, a widow, about fourscore and four years of age, spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. These things however, and others connected with them, which I have omitted to mention, relate to what we should rather call his infancy than his

childhood; and are things which were said, and done, to him, by others; and not words, and actions, of his own. But they will be viewed as precious articles in the account of Jesus Christ, by every one who wants to understand his character, and to whom his name appears to be Wonderful.

His miracles show him to be wonderful. When John sent from the prison two of his disciples to inquire, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another; Jesus gave no answer, either affirmatively, or negatively; but directed them to make out their report, from what they had seen, and heard, and to say the blind receive their sight; and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up; and the poor have the gospel preached to them. This reference to his miracles was the most satisfactory answer, for it showed the fulfilment of prophecies, and presented an astonishing scene of contemplation. Other miracles might be added to this enumeration, and from all, and from each particular miracle, we may see the wonderful character of the Author.

The character of Christ appears to be wonderful from his doctrine, and the manner in which he delivered it. All inspired men, whether prophets, or apostles, must teach the truth, and be infallible, so far as they are inspired. Of course, nothing essentially different can be discovered in what Christ taught himself, from what others have taught, who have spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But still, we learn from the testimony of enemies, that never man spake like this man. His parables are founded on common occurrences, and are not only lessons, but pictures, and so clearly, and forcibly, do they convey the truth, that he must be dull of apprehension, who cannot, in the main, understand them, without having them expounded. We find him too, not unfrequently, meeting the questions which were proposed to him, not by giving a direct answer, but by revealing the thoughts which the inquirers attempted to conceal; or by bringing into view a subject of greater importance than the one to which the question related. Every one must have been struck with this peculiarity who has with any attention read the gospel history.

The life of Christ was as wonderful as any thing concerning him. The lives of the best of men, abound with imperfection, so that it may be said, without a single exception, Man in his best estate is altogether vanity. Moses was an uncommonly meek and faithful man; but for his sins he was forbidden to enter the promised land. Elijah was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; but fearing the wrath of Jezebel, he fled to the cave, and sunk into despondency. David was a man after God's own heart; but his iniquities astonish us. Solomon was the wisest of men, and had extraordinary manifestations of the divine favor; but he was guilty of egregious misconduct, for he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; and built high places for the worship of those lying vanities. The time would fail us to tell of Gideon, and of Barak; of Samson, and of Jephthae; of Samuel, and of the prophets, and apostles at large. Not a single thing however, in the life of Christ, from the first day to the last, can be found which we could say is a blot upon his character. The thief upon the cross declared, This man hath done nothing amiss; and even Judas was compelled to testify, that he had betrayed the innocent blood.

Christ was wonderful in his death. When his murderers were nailing him to the cross, he prayed for them, saying, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. As if insensible to his own sufferings, he was employed in imploring a pardon for their sins. At the time of the crucifixion the scene was awfully majestic. From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, caused by a supernatural eclipse. The vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

The resurrection of Christ was wonderful. Every precaution that could be thought of, was taken to secure the body in the sepulchre where it was deposited. A great stone was rolled at the door, and sealed; and a watch was

placed. But all was in vain. When the time came for him to rise, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

The ascension of Christ was wonderful. Of this St. Luke makes brief mention in his gospel; and again brings it into view in his history of the Acts of the apostles. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them; And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

The second characteristic name which is given to Jesus Christ is Counsellor. In the first chapter of the bible we find this passage. And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness. This is plainly the language of consultation. But with whom can we suppose that God took counsel? It could not be with any of his creatures, for if man was to be made in the image of God, or after his likeness, he could not be made in the image of any creature, or after his likeness, for there is an infinite dissimilarity between the Creator and the creature; and such a supposition would be embarrassed still farther with this difficulty, it would imply, that a creature, acting in concert with his Creator, might create, and of course, might be possessed of creative powers inherent in himself. We are driven then by necessity to look beyond the circle of created intelligences, to find some one to whom God could make such an address, and he who is called counsellor in the text, is the only one that can be found.

In the history of Israel's march through the wilderness we are informed how Moses was directed, as to his own conduct, and that of the people to whom he was appointed leader. The cloudy pillar by day, the pillar of fire by night, was the guide, and as that moved, or rested, so the people

proceeded, or pitched their tents; not following their own judgment, or inclination, but led on by an invisible hand; and whenever any consultation was necessary Christ was the Counsellor.

Kings have their counsellors; but one far above them says, By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. Pious kings will seek for pious counsellors; and especially will they consult him who is the counsellor by way of distinction, that they may be directed in the way of their duty. As to wicked kings, Christ acts as counsellor to them, for though they will not go to him for counsel, their measures shall tend to accomplish the counsels of his wisdom.

Christ is farther the Counsellor, because all his people, whatever may be their stations, and conditions in life, will be sensible, that they need that counsel which he only can give them; and they will consult him with respect to every transaction. The sacred scriptures are a volume of instruction to which nothing can be added; and what we have to do is as particularly pointed out there, as if we were named in connexion with our business. We are therefore, referred to this source of instruction, and if we consider that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, we shall view him as addressing us whenever we attend to his word. They who read for instruction, pray that they may understand what they read, for all who lean to their own understanding are fools; and the scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not.

There is another important sense in which Christ may be viewed as a Counsellor. A Counsellor is one who undertakes and pleads the cause of another. St. John has said, If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and in the eighth chapter of his Revelation, with the same object in view, he has said, And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. In the epistle to the Hebrews we find these words, Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The third name given in this prophecy to the child who is the object of our present attention is, **The Mighty God.** This to many is a hard saying, and they are disposed to inquire, Who can hear it? But it should be remembered that it is a saying embodied with the bible, and that we have no more authority for rejecting this short passage of the bible, than we have for rejecting the bible at large. It should also be remembered that multitudes who once considered this as a hard saying, now cordially receive it, and are sensible, that it was a hard heart which dictated their former judgment. It may be the misconception of some, that we call the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, God; because we give the name of God to Jesus Christ. Nothing could be a greater absurdity, or a more impious error, than this. St. Paul has set this matter before us in a clear light by saying, God was manifest in the flesh.

It may perhaps be said we read in the first chapter of St. John's gospel, **The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;** and if the Word is God, what is this but making God and flesh one and the same thing? The answer to this is, that in the same chapter, and in close connexion with these words; we are told, **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.** But the flesh of Jesus might be seen as the flesh of any other man. Of course the expression the Word was made flesh, must mean the Word was united with flesh; God was manifest in the flesh. If we have any objection against calling this child the mighty God except this, that his humanity could not be his Godhead, Let us ask ourselves what idea we have of God, but what we derive from his names, his attributes, and his works? Now if the names and attributes of God are given to Jesus Christ, and if his works are all the same, if we do not call him God, what shall we call him? God has declared that he will not give his glory to another; and to me it appears utterly impossible that he should; for I think it the greatest of all inconsistencies to suppose two infinite beings to have an existence.

With St. Paul we acknowledge, that the mystery of godliness is great; but upon what principle, or by what rule of

judging, do we conclude, that man, a worm of the dust, who forms the last link in the chain of intelligence, could have God exhibited to him in any way, which would not be equally mysterious? Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do; deeper than hell what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea!

The fourth name we have to consider is, The Everlasting Father. He is not both Father and Son in the same sense, but in the character of Creator, he is the universal Father; and as the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the Author and finisher of faith, he is the Father of the church, without whom it could not have existed; by whom it is preserved, and from whom all that belongs to it, is derived. Sinners become the disciples of Christ by being begotten of God; they are kept from final apostacy by him who made and renewed them; and their rich inheritance consists in that eternal life, which he puts into their possession.

Everlasting is a qualifying epithet, which signifies here, among other things, that Jesus Christ is not a derived being; but absolutely self-existent, having no beginning of days, or end of life.

If he is the Everlasting Father, his purpose is like himself everlasting. Many persons connect with an everlasting purpose, or predestination, various horrible ideas; but they do not seem to understand, that an everlasting, or infinite being, can have no new purpose, because that would imply imperfection; and, that all purposes which are carried into operation, must, in this; be alike in their influence; that they will settle the order of things, or leave it as it was before. A purpose of heaven with or without date, infringing the liberty of man, we may all disapprove of, whenever we can find it, but no such purpose can have an existence, and if we have liberty to choose and act for ourselves, all complaints about restrictions, are unreasonable and criminal. If Christ is the Everlasting Father the question about the perseverance of the saints is decided, and ought never to be called up again, for father and children are correlative terms, and when there are no children, there can be no

father. Of course it would be a great incongruity to speak of the Everlasting Father, if in any way he could be deprived of his children; and if one could be lost, all might be lost for the same reason.

Everlasting Father therefore, is a name which clearly conveys these three ideas; that he to whom it is applied existed from everlasting; that whatever he does, is what from everlasting he purposed to do; and, that those whom at any time he owns for his people, he will forever own as sustaining this relation.

The last name in the list of names before us is, Prince of peace. With reference to this name it may be well for us to consider Christ as to several particulars.

When he was about to leave his disciples he said to them, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled. St. Paul, writing to the Romans says, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Other scriptures might be quoted, but these are sufficient to show, that when any person has peace he obtains it as a gift from Christ, the Prince of peace. From the benedictions in the sermon on the mount, we may see the error of that judgment which is generally formed concerning what constitutes a happy condition of life. If the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; and if all are wicked but pardoned sinners, who have an interest in Christ, the case is a plain one; that we are not to look for enjoyment to outward circumstances, since there is no enjoyment where there is no peace, and there is no peace where there is no faith to produce it. How much happier was John in the isle of Patmos, than the emperor on the throne! Thrones; and scepters; and diadems; and purple robes; and the flat-teries of a sycophantic court; and the homage, and services of a subjected populace, are like mere baubles of the nursery, having no influence to blunt the stings of conscience, and tranquilize the mind.

If individuals have peace, families will have peace, which are made up of such individuals. Thus the house of Bethany, to which Christ so frequently repaired, contained a

family in the enjoyment of peace, for Lazarus, with his two sisters, may be considered as belonging to the Prince of peace. The voice of rejoicing, and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous; and this is easily accounted for, because the righteous Lord is there, directing the voice to be thus employed. Domestic satisfaction is anticipated by those who are in early life, as the sum of human good; but whether what is anticipated will be realized, must depend upon the principles and character, evidenced by the conduct, of those who form the domestic connexion. Zacharias and Elizabeth must have been a very happy couple, to give a single instance, for it is testified of them, that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments, and ordinances, of the Lord, blameless. In the families of Lot; of Job; and of David; there was much enjoyment from the same source; but all did not partake of it, and those who did, had heavy trials from those who did not.

The Prince of peace can establish peace in the church. In the church we have reason to look for peace, because it is utterly wrong, and astonishingly strange, that the members of the same body should ever be at variance. But the case is not always as it should be, for animosities and contentions are evils of no rare occurrence among those who profess to be brethren. These things are not unfrequently charged to religion, though they ought to be charged to the want of it. Upon the day of pentecost, there was a vast accession to the church, and the record informs us of the peace, and harmony, and love, of that early time. Is it possible that any one can repeat the prayer which Christ gave to his disciples, or make a prayer himself, in coincidence with that, feeling in his heart what he expresses in his words, and yet be disposed to hostility? The spirit of Christ clears the way of obstructions; removes the punctilios which pride magnifies into mountains of difficulty; and devises measures of accommodation which are easily carried into effect. Peace among the members of a church is the most convincing evidence of the presence of Christ in that church; and the state of religion may be always estimated by this standard.

Christ is the Prince of peace still farther; because it is from him that the nations of the earth derive the blessing. Because nations wearing the christian name only to disgrace it, have had their share in the wars which have drenched the world in blood, does it follow that nothing has been done by christianity; and that nothing will be done, to bring these evils to a termination? Is there no part of the world at the present time, that appears to advantage in this respect, when compared with ancient Syria; Assyria; Egypt; Greece and Rome? If any good has already been effected, much more may be looked for at a future period. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. They shall beat their swords into plough shares; and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

We are called upon to keep this day as a day of thanksgiving. We might make out a long list of temporal, and spiritual blessings, which we have received from God during the year which is drawing to a close, and for which we are under obligation to render him our tribute of thanks. But every year that has passed over our heads, has been crowned with the goodness of God, and has brought us good things much of the same description. We are apt to think more of what we have, or of what we want, of the things of this world, than of our condition as another world is regarded. But certain it is, that if the greatest mercies are overlooked, we are not thankful for those of smaller importance. It is time for us all to inquire whether we can adopt the language of the apostle, and say in sincerity, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. We can if we understand the subject which we have been considering, and are sensible, that our interest is closely connected with it.

An annual thanksgiving is an institution which has much to recommend it. But those who spend it as a mere holiday, will find in the end, that by so doing, they have added

items of consequence to their account of transgression. Hear what God said to his ancient people with respect to their festivals, Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. Wherever any are anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved; or having obtained a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, are rejoicing in the hope of the gospel, this day will be stamped with a sacred character, and its exercises will be devotional.

SERMON VIII.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

EZEKIEL. xxi, 27.

I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

THESE words, though found in a book ascribed to Ezekiel as the author, are the words of God himself; and they were spoken in the days of Zedekiah, that profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose iniquities brought him to so miserable an end.

In these words is contained a prophecy of the overturnings that were to take place among that people, before the coming of Christ in the flesh; and also of the various changes which would be brought about in the world at large, as introductory to the most extensive and perfect establishment of his kingdom among men.

All the affairs of God are under his own government; and though men are busy in building up, and in pulling down; and though they are accountable for what they do, according to the motives from which they do it; through their instrumentality his own glorious purposes are accomplished. It is the nature of man to do evil; and it is the prerogative of God to bring good out of evil. Thus all things are under the government of God; and he will have the glory, while his enemies will be covered with shame.

In the consideration of this passage of scripture, the first thing to be noticed is the overturnings which were to take place. As the expression is a general one, it may be regarded as extending to things in general.

Among the things referred to, civil government may be reckoned as one important particular. In the history of Israel we may see in what different ways, that nation was governed from time to time, so that the prediction was exactly fulfilled, The sceptre shall not depart from Judah; nor a law giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.

Other nations likewise, with their revolutions, are to be taken into the account. The Assyrian empire, in existence at the time when Ezekiel penned the text, was succeeded by the Persian; that by the Grecian, and that by the Roman empire; and they all experienced their own overturnings. The Roman empire was destroyed by the irruptions of various barbarous people, for which its own effeminacy prepared the way. Like the agitated ocean, the world has ever been putting on new appearances; and kingdoms have been rising and falling. Many of those who are now upon the stage of life, have witnessed an uncommonly eventful period; for never before, did the work of revolution go on with such rapidity.

When we survey the state of things as it is at present, and call to mind who are rulers and who are subjects, we shall see, that a great alteration is necessary, and to be expected. That some were born to be kings and others to be their servants, is a doctrine, which, however current it has been, will not always be acknowledged to be sound doctrine. Though there ever has been; and ever will be, an inequality among men, the rights which belong to all, all will be disposed to vindicate, when they feel themselves to be possessed of the power.

Kings and courtiers may make vigorous opposition to such measures as tend to strip them of their usurped authority; but all will be as vain as an attempt would be to arrest the furious whirlwind. We see that when a nation wills its own freedom, it can be free; and breaking the shackles by which it has been bound, it can triumph over despotic oppressors, and establish at once a new order of thing.

Not only will civil government be so changed in its form, and in all its circumstances, as to be administered upon new principles; but religion likewise, that is what goes by that name, will experience a great alteration. In the time of

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Ezekiel, the knowledge of God was confined to that nation of which he was a member for to no other people had a revelation been imparted.

The circumstances of the world are different, at present; for since that nation was rejected, other nations have been put into possession of the privileges which they for a long time, generally, abused. Yet the light which the world now has, is but the twilight; or to speak more properly, it is like the light of the sun, when out of sight, it casts its beams on some distant eminence. The great body of mankind is, at this moment, made up of pagans; heathens; gentiles; idolators; the several terms having, mainly the same signification. They have their objects, and their modes of worship, with some variation, according to circumstances, but the declaration of St. Paul has no limitation; and we may without any danger of varying from the truth, apply it as extensively as we please, and say, The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.

If it be proper to make a man's morals the test of his principles; and all are agreed that it is; we can call for no farther proof of the dreadful state of the heathen world; but shall be convinced that the devil has there set up a kingdom of darkness. Travellers, and missionaries of veracity, are eye, and ear, witnesses to many, and various abominations; and they are sending us their accounts from the different stations which they occupy. It is now as it ever was, the learned, and the rude, where the Sun of righteousness does not shine, are wrapped up in the same cloud; and the means which are necessary to rescue one are equally necessary to rescue the other. Those temples and those altars, which have been erected by the instigation of the devil, must be thrown down; and that idolatry in which he delights because it is worship rendered to himself, will certainly be brought to an end.

The descendants of those who as a people, were once in covenant with God, are now inhabiting different parts of the earth, in different circumstances, generally, and differing, particularly, as to their means of information, but all alike in this, that they are ignorant of the one thing needful. The blood of Christ, according to the request of

those who crucified him, rests upon them to the present day. They are unbelievers as a people; and their prejudices are strong against christianity. Those prejudices are handed down from one generation to another; and the very education which the children receive, lays the foundation for a long, and in most instances, an endless infidelity. The force of such an unhappy education upon the mind is productive of infinite evil. They look at Christ as a man looks at an enemy, against whom he has an inveterate antipathy; discerning nothing excellent in him, but considering him as a composition of every thing that is disagreeable, and loathsome.

It is well known, that enmity gives a false coloring to objects; and enmity when instilled into children, and strengthened by a combination of circumstances, as is the case with this people respecting this affair, operates like the bars of a castle, or like an insuperable wall. This is the vail which is spread over the understanding of this unbelieving, and rebellious people; and until this vail shall be taken away, they will have no Savior; and of course their lives must terminate miserably. Though every one is, by nature, an infidel, still there are degrees in infidelity; and this people have all the influence of pernicious instruction, operating against their salvation, in addition to that alienation of heart which is natural. Thus circumstanced, they read nothing with any candor, but the things which relate to the Mosaic dispensation; and even these they do not understand; for the words of Christ to the people of his day, are always equally pertinent. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. It is not to be expected, that persons will believe any doctrine to be true, who set themselves to work to prove it to be false. The weight of argument is usually thought to be on that side upon which we wish it to be.

As Christ is the only Savior and as he has declared, that he will deny those who deny him, it may be fairly concluded, that no Jew, in sentiment, and feeling, living, and dying, such will ever obtain a seat in heaven. Understanding the subject in this way, the apostle has left upon record the grief which he felt on account of his countrymen.

Notwithstanding so many centuries have passed away, and this people are still under the cloud, their condition will not always continue as it is. Many prophetic scriptures assure us of their restoration to the knowledge, and favor, of God. Their present circumstances, and their future circumstances, are exactly described by Hosea. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king; and without a prince; and without a sacrifice; and without an image; and without an ephod; and without teraphim: Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days.

That apostacy at the head of which is the Man of sin, is a pernicious evil which has long been in the world. A worm of the dust, appointed to be a humble, and faithful overseer of the church, forgetful of his charge, aspired to the dominion which belongs to God; and to the exercise of those powers with which God only is invested; and thus a foundation was laid for that imposture the Popish religion. How far this religion has extended, and how mischievous has been its influence, must be known to all who have improved the means of knowledge which are commonly possessed.

The Man of sin must, and will be destroyed, and his work will come to an end with him. Already has the Pope shrunk from his gigantic dimensions to a mere skeleton; and his once formidable anathemas, are now regarded with as little emotion as the echo of the woodman's voice, or the sound of his axe. There is however still much to be done to clear popish countries of the evils with which popery has filled them.

The false prophet is about of the same age with the man of sin; and has been employed in carrying on the same work though not in the same way. Mahometan delusions were forced upon mankind; and it was with the point of the sword, as with a fescue that their author showed his pupils what they had to learn. This imposture is still maintained by measures the most despotic.

Whatever else may be denoted by the false prophet, this is doubtless a character applicable to Mahomet; for he pre-

tended to prophesy; and falsehood was the burden of his prophecy. As a man, he has gone to the dust; and the mighty fabric which he erected, waits only the moment destined for its demolition. A great change will be produced in the condition of mankind, when these monstrous establishments of iniquity shall be overturned; but much more must be done in regard to religion and the work will not be completed until it is done.

The christian world will not be in reality, what its name imports, until every false doctrine is discarded, and nothing suffered to remain, but what may be denominated pure and undefiled religion. As to things indifferent, there may be a diversity of opinions; but if we consider all things to be indifferent, it must be because we have no just conception of any thing.

Who can doubt that that doctrine will be given up, which holds out a hope, indiscriminately to men, founded upon nothing but the mercy of God; since his mercy, though an acknowledged, and an essential attribute, must always be exercised in consistency with his justice. The manifest evil tendency of this doctrine, is alone sufficient evidence of its falsehood; and we need not hesitate to predict, that the time will come, when it will have no advocates. Should its truth be admitted, no reason could be assigned, why God gave a revelation to the world; for if mercy, one of his essential attributes, be itself the foundation of hope, the foundation would have been as broad, as sure, and as permanent, without revelation, as it is with.

That doctrine too, which, by substituting the righteousness of man, for the righteousness of God, robs God of his glory; whether it be called Socinianism; Arianism; Unitarianism; or be designated by the still broader, and more general term, Arminianism, will be driven away like the chaff, when he whose fan is in his hand, shall thoroughly purge his floor. Man dependant as he is, aspires after independence; and hence it is not strange, that a doctrine should be believed which coincides with, and countenances natural propensities. How long shall be its continuance, or how wide shall be its spread, we have not the means of determining; but doubtless it will be given up, when

God shall appear to vindicate his own rights; for he will plead with all flesh.

The overturnings in civil government, and in religion, will be connected with an important overturning in those things which relate generally, to the state of society.

When other things shall be set right, surely the great wrong of slavery will not be suffered to continue. No one is a slave because he chooses to be, and no one will be willing to hold others in slavery, when the criminality of the business, shall be so well understood as to excite proper feelings with regard to it. At present the mass of human flesh bought and sold, to gratify avarice, and support pride, makes a great show among the commodities of a trafficking world; but this we explain by saying, that the hearts of men are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It will be otherwise when right views shall be entertained, and that sensibility shall be excited which is consequent upon viewing things as they are.

Duelling which has been tolerated even under the laws which condemn it, because the laws of honor as they have been miscalled, have been more regarded than the laws made to protect life, whether human or divine, will be no more, when every one shall see, that the duellist is a murderer, aiming at his object, with uncommon deliberation. The time will come when the obstacle in the way of enforcing the laws against duelling will be as great as it now is, but this will be the obstacle, that no cases will occur.

Wars too, which have been considered as unavoidable, and which have been advocated upon the same principle, that the physician maintains, that bleeding is a measure sometimes to be adopted, can be easily dispensed with, when the lusts from which they spring shall be subdued.

Houses of ill fame have been suffered to be kept up in populous places, that the victims of vice might have an opportunity to indulge themselves; and it has been asserted that if this were not done, something worse would take place. A remedy for this evil however, will easily be found when the victims of vice shall assume a new character; and a reformation of this kind must be most important in its consequences.

Theatrical exhibitions have exhausted the means of subsistence; corrupted the morals of mankind; and probably, led thousands, and millions to destruction, final and eternal. But as a want of relish for better things has kept these things in existence, so when better things shall be relished, these things will be looked upon with disgust.

Extravagance, in the various ways in which it is indulged, and which, like an epidemic, spreads around without regard to age, sex, or condition, is an evil of no inconsiderable magnitude. This evil, in which God's people have always had a participation, with others, will be remedied, without any difficulty, when the voice of the world shall be one mighty voice against it. Quite a new time it will be when men shall look upon superfluities, as they do upon the baubles of the nursery; and when their acquisitions shall bear a resemblance to the gathering of the manna in the wilderness, concerning which it is said, that He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.

If we turn our attention to those who occupy the highest places among men, we may find them expending in a week, if not in a day, what would be considered by others, at least equally deserving, a handsome and comfortable establishment for life. It will not be so when the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down; and every one shall esteem it his highest honor, to imitate him who took upon him the form of a servant, and condescended to wash his disciples feet.

The second thing to be taken into consideration from the text is, what is to succeed the overturnings spoken of; which is the coming of him whose right it is.

This passage was penned about six hundred years before the birth of Christ, which was his first coming; and unquestionably had a partial fulfilment in that event. But an event still future seems also to be referred to, which is called the coming of Christ, or his reign of a thousand years upon the earth. It is to this coming of Christ that the general overturnings which have been mentioned are preparatory. We have no warrant for expecting him again in person, and embodied as before; but his presence will be

realized, by the powerful, and widely extended influence which his religion will have over men.

Should it be inquired how it is known, that Christ was intended by him who was spoken of as to come, since his name is not to be found in the passage, it might be answered, that the description is applicable to him, and not applicable to any other. Whether we consider the kingdom of Israel as what was to be overturned, or the world with all its kingdoms, and with every thing belonging to it, it is, unquestionably, to Christ, that the right belongs. This may be made to appear, by bringing into notice the several things that are said of him in the scriptures.

We should not hesitate to say, that he who created all things must have a right to all things. Now nothing is more unambiguously declared than, that Christ is the Creator. An inspired apostle tells us, that all things were made by him, and, that without him was not any thing made that was made. It is true, that he does not here call him Christ; but he describes him so, that no one can misunderstand, for he calls him the Word; and says, The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace, and truth. Indeed from this description he proceeds to give us the testimony of John Baptist concerning him; and dropping his first appellation, he speaks of him as Christ, and as Jesus. This apostle being inspired might be viewed as a sufficient witness, if he stood alone; but he is only one among many witnesses. By saying, that without him was not any thing made that was made, he entirely shuts our mouths if we are disposed to call him a creature, and to assert, that what he created was in the exercise of powers delegated for the purpose. If every being, and thing which had a beginning was derived from him, he must be himself underived, and consequently, God.

The right of the Creator cannot be increased by other considerations because it is indisputable, but as it is proper to mention all, let it be added here that he who made all things, continues them in existence. This would be a rational conclusion, had we no information upon the subject; but the declarations of the scriptures are directly to the

point. By him all things consist. Upholding all things by the word of his power. Stronger expressions could not be used, nor more intelligible ones to convey the idea. If therefore the whole creation owes its continuance to his superintendence, and rests upon him as a building does upon its foundation, the whole creation is his so absolutely, that to call in question his right to it, would be both the greatest absurdity, and the greatest iniquity. The claims which one man has upon another, however incontestible, have, in all instances, infinitely less to support them.

To creation, and preservation, we add redemption, as that upon which the right of Christ to all things is founded. Throughout the scriptures the work of redemption is considered as the greatest of all the works of God; and to every one who is at all a competent judge, it must appear the crowning work of all.

The angels at the birth of the Savior, sang glory to God in the highest; and his birth was the theme which filled them with such rapturous emotions, The first sabbath had reference to the creation; and was intended to commemorate the rest of God, when he had brought that great affair to a consummation. It must be obvious to all, that there never would have been a change of the sabbath, and a different event referred to in the observance of it, had not some event been brought about, still more important than even creation itself. The sabbath now kept is the Lord's day; or the day of his resurrection from the dead. Of course as his resurrection is an interesting part of the work of redemption, that work holds the highest place, and requires the greatest attention.

The consequences of the work of redemption to the universe at large, surpass all calculation, for it is through this medium that knowledge is imparted of the manifold wisdom of God to the highest orders of beings. We may adopt the sublime apostrophe of a christian poet who in all probability is now singing himself, in still sublimer strains.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth.
Thou who alone art worthy, it was thine.

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The right of the Creator cannot be increased by other considerations because it is indisputable, but as it is proper to mention all, let it be added here that he who made all things, continues them in existence. This would be a rational conclusion, had we no information upon the subject; but the declarations of the scriptures are directly to the

point. By him all things consist. Upholding all things by the word of his power. Stronger expressions could not be used, nor more intelligible ones to convey the idea. If therefore the whole creation owes its continuance to his superintendence, and rests upon him as a building does upon its foundation, the whole creation is his so absolutely, that to call in question his right to it, would be both the greatest absurdity, and the greatest iniquity. The claims which one man has upon another, however incontestible, have, in all instances, infinitely less to support them.

To creation, and preservation, we add redemption, as that upon which the right of Christ to all things is founded. Throughout the scriptures the work of redemption is considered as the greatest of all the works of God; and to every one who is at all a competent judge, it must appear the crowning work of all.

The angels at the birth of the Savior, sang glory to God in the highest; and his birth was the theme which filled them with such rapturous emotions, The first sabbath had reference to the creation; and was intended to commemorate the rest of God, when he had brought that great affair to a consummation. It must be obvious to all, that there never would have been a change of the sabbath, and a different event referred to in the observance of it, had not some event been brought about, still more important than even creation itself. The sabbath now kept is the Lord's day; or the day of his resurrection from the dead. Of course as his resurrection is an interesting part of the work of redemption, that work holds the highest place, and requires the greatest attention.

The consequences of the work of redemption to the universe at large, surpass all calculation, for it is through this medium that knowledge is imparted of the manifold wisdom of God to the highest orders of beings. We may adopt the sublime apostrophe of a christian poet who in all probability is now singing himself, in still sublimer strains.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth.
Thou who alone art worthy, it was thine

realized, by the powerful, and widely extended influence which his religion will have over men.

Should it be inquired how it is known, that Christ was intended by him who was spoken of as to come, since his name is not to be found in the passage, it might be answered, that the description is applicable to him, and not applicable to any other. Whether we consider the kingdom of Israel as what was to be overturned, or the world with all its kingdoms, and with every thing belonging to it, it is, unquestionably, to Christ, that the right belongs. This may be made to appear, by bringing into notice the several things that are said of him in the scriptures.

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Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth.
Thou who alone art worthy, it was thine.

By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth,
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.

To complete what may be said in support of that right which Christ has to the world, let it be added in a word, that he made all things for himself; that the church is his body; and, that to minister to this body, is the end which all things have to answer.

Those who acknowledge Jesus Christ to be God over all, will acknowledge his right without any limitation; but those who assert him to be a mere creature of God, whatever rank they may allow him, will be puzzled to maintain that he has any right; since all creatures must be subordinate, and dependant, and every thing which may be strictly called a right, must be possessed, and exercised by God himself.

Though this passage may not have been reckoned among the direct proofs of the deity of Christ, it seems even alone, to be proof abundantly sufficient, since it allows of no explanation, if we deny that doctrine. We should do well to pause, and reflect upon the passage, and upon all other passages, which hold up the same object in the same light.

The concluding clause remains, and we shall give it a brief consideration. And I will give it him. This is common language in the scriptures. Christ is spoken of as the gift of God to the world; and his people, and every thing, relating to his kingdom, are spoken of as the gift of God to him. A few quotations will be sufficient: For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful; Counsellor; The mighty God; The everlasting Father; The prince of Peace. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people; a leader, and commander, to the people. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the

great; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Father the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

If Christ is the independent God, having a right, in consequence of his independence, to all things, how he can be given to the world; and how the world can be given to him, is a mystery which no one will undertake to unravel. But do we not receive the scriptures as the Word of God; and is not this the manner in which this affair is represented in the scriptures? If the scriptures are the Word of God, the representations which they give us, however they may exceed our comprehension, are undoubtedly correct. Is this the only thing which appears unintelligible? Can we say we have a clear conception of that eternal God whose existence all are compelled to admit; under whatever name, they may designate him; or whatever they may suppose the mode of his existence? Can we trace the hand of God in creation; and see how he made all things out of nothing, by the word of his power? Do we understand how matter and spirit, or the body and soul, which are the two component parts of man, and which have less affinity than oil and water, can be so united as to act upon each other, producing effects of which we are every day sensible? Can we tell in what way inspiration was imparted to the prophets, when they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and described events to be brought about at the most remote period.

If we have any leisure, and suppose ourselves to have any ability to solve difficult questions, we can find enough of them; and a list sufficiently long to answer our purpose, is contained in the thirty-eighth chapter of Job. The scriptures present different views to mankind, according to their different dispositions, as the pillar of the cloud, when it came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel,

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gave light by night to the Israelites but was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians.

A proper attention to the words of our Savior to the Jews, would free us from all difficulties of this kind. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Those who have been the most faithful in their service, have ever been the least perplexed in their minds; and if we would have more discernment we should ask for more faith. The promise of God in the text, that he would give it; the kingdom, or the world, to Christ, whatever there may be in it which we cannot comprehend, clearly conveys this idea, that the kingdom, or the world, should be brought into such a situation, as to be subject to, and quiet under, the government of Christ. This must be the case if things civil, and religious; if the affairs of the great community of mankind, experience such an alteration, or overturning, that it will be proper to say, Old things are passed away behold all things are become new.

If those evils, public, and private, and of every name, and nature, which have hitherto disgraced the human character, shall be laid aside, what can take their place, but holiness in its various manifestations? Many will treat as chimerical, whatever is said about a day of universal peace, and holiness. Why do not the same persons treat as chimerical, the calculations of astronomers, and say, that the eclipses which they predict, will never take place? Are the truths of God less to be depended upon, than the principles of astronomical calculation? Does not history coincide exactly with prophecy, so far as the time has come for the prophecy to be fulfilled?

Let no one then, congratulate himself, and call his own unbelief superior judgment; but let every unbeliever take warning from unbelievers of old time. Noah's ark, doubtless, furnished a topic for much ridicule. But what became of those who ridiculed the ark, and its builder? The flood washed them away. The people of Sodom disregarded, and despised, all the counsels, and instructions, of Lot. What became of them? They were consumed in a storm of fire, and brimstone. What became of the unbelieving

lord, who treated with contempt the prophecy of Elisha, respecting plenty in Samaria? He lived to see the plenty; but not to partake of it, for he was trodden to death at the gate.

It is acknowledged, that the change we are contemplating as to take place in the world, will be so great and wonderful, that those who disregard what God has said about it, and are unmindful of his power, may, in perfect consistency with their principles, pronounce it altogether impossible. That it will be effected we are assured; and how it will be effected we are, generally, informed. Miracles have had their day and have answered their purpose.

What is now to be done will be brought about in the ordinary way of God's dispensations, and by the instrumentality of second causes. The work was going on in St. Paul's day; and he was one of the instruments; and from him we may learn what means are suitable to be used and what will be effectual. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. A single clause of Daniel's prophecy with respect to the time of the end, or the last days, will be sufficient information. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. From this we learn, that many persons were to be employed as teachers; or to give them another name, as missionaries, to instruct the ignorant, not only, nor especially, in things relating to civilized life; but in the higher concern of religion.

Of course we are to expect that the bible, which hitherto, has been confined within a narrow circle; will be sent in every direction, and translated into the various languages of the world, that it may be understood.

Perhaps it may be thought that since the bible has had but a partial influence in those christian countries where it has long been used as a school book, the most that we can expect from it, should it be circulated through the world will be, that it will produce such effects within a great circle, as it has already produced within a small one. Such

an opinion would have more to support it than it now has, if we were not taught, in the plainest manner, to look for such things as the world has never yet experienced. The text is a mass of information, and evidence, of itself. The eleventh chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans deserves to be consulted likewise; and whoever believes it to be true, must have very high expectations with respect to future time.

We have now given our subject a hasty, and imperfect discussion, and will bring it to a close with a few words of improvement.

St. Paul's words to the Romans are pertinent in our case, What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. The chief advantage which the Jews had in that day consisted in this, that they were favored with revelation which other nations had not. We have the same revelation, enlarged by the addition of all the New Testament. If this constitutes our principal advantage, as doubtless it does, we are thankful for nothing, unless we are especially thankful for this. From the scriptures we may learn the character of God; and our own character; our duty; and our destiny; what has filled the world with evil; and what will cure the evil of the world; what events are to take place at one period, and another, and what will be the grand result; and from this source we may derive our highest enjoyments for the present; and our brightest and most substantial hopes for the future.

God has also given us a goodly heritage. Instead of inhabiting a barren nook of earth, we dwell in a land so extensive as to offer easy acquisitions to the people; and so abundant in its productions, that industry is seldom disappointed. If we should be thankful for a little of this world, how thankful should we be for the abundance which we possess.

Notwithstanding all the wretched beings who are held in bondage within some sections of our country, we are a free people, for those who have any thing, have it under

their control; and appoint their rulers, and displace them, at their pleasure.

The means of information too, are general, and easy to be obtained; and schools of various kinds, and colleges, are numerous, and increasing.

Here religion has flourished in every age, and though the gospel net has gathered of every kind, many will be found in the end, who will not be cast away.

The past year has been marked with much favor as our condition has been regarded. The earth has yielded her increase, and the means of subsistence can be obtained with uncommon ease. Peace has given to business a new direction; but have not all who have wished to be busy, found something profitable to do? Some parts of our country have been visited with mortal disease, to a very great degree; but notwithstanding the season with us, has been uncommon, there has been general health among the people in this region.

We in this society have had as many deaths as common, which we should remember as admonitions; while we should notice with gratitude, the health that has prevailed.

If we are thankful for the blessings which we have always had, we shall be thankful that God is blessing other people; the savages of our wilderness; many other parts of the heathen world; and the world, generally. The work of God goes on so rapidly, that he must be insensible who can inquire, Where is the promise of his coming? Nations are born in a day.

Whether a world which has been so accustomed to convulsions, will not be again convulsed, time must determine, but for present favorable appearances let us thank God and take courage.

We meet here my friends, annually upon such an occasion as this; and every year we miss some who made a part of the assembly the preceeding year; and who had as good reason as any others to calculate upon future opportunities. If from what has been, we may judge of what will be, this will be the last day of public Thanksgiving with some of us. Where should we have been had God taken us instead of others whom he has called away? Are we thankful, that the

Spirit, and the bride still address us, and say, Come? To spend life on the abuse of God's goodness is to spend it foolishly, and wickedly, indeed. The general appearance of things among us it must be acknowledged is less favorable than it was the last year at this time. Let us all consider what God has done for us, and what returns we ought to make to him. Let those who have lamps inquire whether they have oil; for lamps without oil, are useless things. May God add his blessing to our services, and accept us for his name's sake.

SERMON IX.

FAST SERMON.

EZRA viii, 21.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way, for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

Not far from eighty years after the proclamation of Cyrus, releasing the Jews from captivity, and directing them to build the house of God at Jerusalem, a larger number than at first undertook it, set out to accomplish the business. At some inconsiderable river called Ahava, Ezra the head of the company, feeling his dependance to be upon God, for guidance, protection, and every blessing that was needed, proclaimed a fast, requiring the people religiously to observe it. The expediency of the measure was abundantly proved by the consequences.

A fast is peculiarly proper, and imperiously called for, in circumstances of difficulty, and danger; but in any circumstances, to fast, is both a duty, and a privilege, for prosperity is very precarious, and when good things are abused there is reason to fear that they will be taken away. The Jews had their annual, and occasional, fasts, and so have we; and the benefit of such solemnities has always been in proportion to the sincerity, and faithfulness, with which they have been observed.

The manner in which Ezra intended to have his fast kept we learn from his own words and also the object aimed at in keeping it.

The people were to keep the fast by afflicting themselves. When God appointed the day of atonement for the people of Israel he made use of similar language. As Ezra says

he proclaimed a fast in order that he and those who were with him might afflict themselves we may be sure that to abstain from food was part of the duty of the day. To many persons perhaps, abstinence from food appears to be of no more consequence than those popish penances which are dictated by superstition, and which can answer no other end than to bring damage upon those who subject themselves to them.

If men reputed wise, have in some instances entertained such an opinion, men actually wise have in a far greater number of instances thought otherwise. Moses to a good understanding added all the learning of Egypt, but he fasted forty days; and he appears to have kept a fast of this length at three different times; before he received the first tables of the law; when he was informed of the golden calf which Aaron made; and when he received the last tables. Elijah was a distinguished prophet, and he fasted forty days. Daniel's wisdom was seen and acknowledged for a long time at the court of Babylon; yet he was not too wise to fast. These are names of the first respectability; and it is well known, that we might lengthen the list to say nothing of public bodies, by the mention of David, Nehemiah, Joshua, Samuel, Jehoshaphat, and others, concerning whose fasting we have an account.

The body needs sustenance, and must be frequently fed; and when in health, such is our appetite for food, that to abstain from it requires much self denial. The mind acts upon the body, and the body upon the mind, so intimate is their connexion; and we can hardly afflict one without afflicting both. If we could not see why a day of humiliation might not be as well observed when the animal part is allowed its customary meals as when it is denied them, still the command of God, and the practice of his people to which we may add the example of Christ, ought to be considered as a sufficient warrant for us, and should silence all our objections.

To afflict ourselves is still further to suspend all our ordinary secular business, and thus to relinquish whatever profit might arise from it. What constitutes the sabbath holy time is the divine appointment of the day, to be spent

in religious services; and all work is as much forbidden in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus where we have the precept given to Israel respecting their annual fast, or day of atonement, as it is in that commandment of the moral law, the object of which is to regulate the observance of the sabbath.

Since with us a fast is appointed by our rulers it seems to be thought by some, that it is left to the choice of the people whether they will work or worship, though there is nothing relating to it of human designation but the time, the fast itself, in whatever month, or in whatever day, it may come, being now as much as ever it was, a holy convocation. Notwithstanding religious services are not required too frequently of those who are religiously disposed, yet as it comports with our natural inclinations to feed the body, so does it also to spend our time to some worldly advantage; and to deny ourselves this advantage is like denying ourselves the usual allowance of food; and in both cases we may be said to afflict ourselves.

To afflict ourselves however, something more is requisite than merely to abstain from food, and to suspend our labor; we must take a retrospect of life, considering what God has done for us, and how we have requited him. If we are not wholly callous, nothing can afflict us so much as the recollection of our own sins, taken in connexion with the circumstances in which they have been committed. Though God has nourished and brought us up as children we have rebelled against him; and while the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, our reason, if left to its own exercise, has operated to less purpose than animal instinct; for, by it, we have not known, nor considered, from whose store-house all our wants have been supplied.

Creatures of every rank, are altogether dependant upon their Creator, and they should continually acknowledge their dependance, and exhibit that humility which would betoken their consciousness of it. What a monster would he be thought who should treat an earthly parent as we treat God. But whatever obligations we are under to parents, or other friends in this world, they are obligations to them, only in a secondary sense, for God is the author, and giver

of all our mercies, whoever may be the instrument by which they are conferred.

If any of us have entertained an incorrect opinion with regard to a fast, it is likely that our conduct has been as incorrect as our opinion, and this is a favorable time for an examination of ourselves.

The object which Ezra proposed by the observance of this fast was, that he and all the people might seek a right way; and that for themselves and their little ones; and their substance. Disregarding those circumstances in which the case of that people differed from our own, we ought to make their practice our example. Three things here deserve a distinct consideration.

Let us first inquire what it is for us to seek a right way for ourselves; or what way would be right. The way to which our natural hearts incline us is undoubtedly a wrong one; for all those who pursue it reverse the order of reason and religion, and instead of seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, they seek first; principally, and altogether, the things of this world. What we should do is so plainly made known that nothing could be plainer, as well as what we should not do; and the considerations exhibited, to bring us to a compliance with our duty, are such as there is no difficulty in understanding.

Our connexion with the things of this world must be so short, at the longest, that this life when eternity is brought into view, is wholly lost, as the rivers are lost, and cease to be rivers when they roll their waters into the ocean. If earthly things were of the same character with those of heaven, to give them the preference or to allow them to come into competition, would be to act very unwisely, and very inconsistently. Who would not value more an estate secured to him, and to his heirs, forever, than one which he might possess as a tenant, and from which he might be removed any day, by the irresistible will of the owner? Seventy years are but a short term to look back upon; and yet from that term we must make great deductions, to ascertain that portion of human life which is suited to much enjoyment. When such an allowance is made for childhood, and for old age, as ought to be made; the middle part, the

only one to which any considerable importance is attached dwindles to a point. But how small is the number of those, whose age as recorded upon the monuments erected to point out the place of their interment, amounts to seventy years? The graves of infants, and children, and youth, are abundant, but those of the aged are very few.

Now would not every thing that we can see put on a different aspect, and assume an additional importance, if we could promise ourselves so long a life as that which was allotted to some individuals in the early age of the world, and ought we not to buy as though we possessed not; since whatever we hold as our own at present, was held by others before us, and will be held by others after us, a very short period of time intervening.

When we look however, from the things that are temporal, to those which are eternal, we exchange a narrow prospect for a wide one; and instead of being in such circumstances, that we may reach, any moment, that bound which we must soon arrive at; we can neither see, nor imagine, any end to our connexion with things of so near a nature.

But great as the difference is, in respect to the duration, of earthly things and heavenly, this is by no means the only difference to be considered. Earthly things, of every kind, appear less substantial when possessed than when pursued; while heavenly things brighten, and increase in value, the nearer we approach them; and instead of disappointing, always exceed our expectations. What we have, if it is what we can see, is not what we want; we crave something more of the same kind; or something different; and expect contentment, from a change of circumstances. The child aspires to be a youth; the youth a man; and the man looks forward to that state of independence which he can never realize. On the contrary he who sets his heart upon those unseen objects which deserve supreme regard, enjoys the present, and wishes for no change but in himself; sensible that as he becomes more humble, and more holy, he shall of course become more happy. The grand object of every day should be to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come; and we should especially prize, and improve, those days which God has appointed for

our especial benefit, and with which he has connected especial advantages. It seems as if we could hardly fail of feeling the force of Solomon's humbling address; Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer; and gathereth her food in the harvest.

We need a spiritual portion for present comfort, whatever else we may possess; and how can we do without it when death shall strip us of every earthly thing? Since the things of heaven are so good in this life, that nothing can be good without them, how much must they be enhanced in value, to those whose portion they shall be in another, and far different world, where this corruptible shall put on incorruption; this mortal put on immortality; death be swallowed up in victory; and every thing, without, and within, become in the strictest, and highest sense perfect!

But may we not suppose that we are making, the things of God's kingdom the great object of desire, and pursuit, and find ourselves in the end wretchedly disappointed? To deny the possibility of this would be to call in question the truth of many passages of the scriptures. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Israel of old, followed after righteousness, but did not attain to righteousness; and the reason is stated in connexion with the fact. We have it from the mouth of the Judge of the quick and the dead himself, that many hereafter will seek to enter into heaven, and shall not be able; that is many will claim, and expect, the dignity and happiness gratuitously bestowed upon the saints, upon the ground of their own merit; without understanding what constitutes that dignity, and happiness, after which they will be so impatient.

All this being admitted for truth, it does not follow, that religion is a subject concerning which nothing can be known; for we may say with St. Paul, If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost; and we may say with him, Examine yourselves; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves; how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be

reprobates; and we may say with him also, We desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end. But is it not a fact too well known to be disputed, that religion, generally speaking has less attention given to it than any subject which can be named; and that we are inclined to draw the most favorable and unwarrantable conclusions, as the bankrupt debtor does, who is afraid to understand the real state of his affairs?

Let it be whispered, that the title to our farm is questionable, and we shall take the first opportunity, convenient, or inconvenient, to search the records which will ascertain the matter. Now, if our remissness will sufficiently account for the scantiness of our knowledge in spiritual affairs, it is unnecessary, and improper, to assign any other reason. However liable we may be to deception, when we judge ourselves to be right, the case may be so circumstanced, as to allow of no doubt that we are wrong. If a public record of our title is indispensable to secure to us the land which we call our own; our title to the incorruptible inheritance depends upon this, that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

If Christ be not our Savior, we have none; and he is not our Savior, unless we believe in him as such; and place our whole dependance upon him. Without faith it is impossible to please God; and we have no faith that is acceptable, unless we believe, in the most unqualified sense, in the Son of God. So inseparably connected are repentance, and evangelical faith, that an impenitent believer believes to no more purpose than the devils do. Love is the fulfilling of the law; and if you would find it any where upon earth, you must look for it among penitent believing sinners.

These three things, faith; repentance; and that love which does not depend upon natural ties, and the common connexion of interest; are the fruits of a divinely cultivated soil, and can be expected only in hearts which have been sanctified by the grace of God. Should I be inquired of whether a man's life is no evidence of his character, I would reply, that Christ has sufficiently answered this question by saying, A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart,

bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things. Every article of conduct is characterized by that state of heart from which it originates. Saul of Tarsus was, if we may believe his own testimony, touching the law, blameless, when, at the same time, he was, if we may credit what he says himself, without the law, having no understanding of its nature, and obligations; and being in a situation to act the part of the chief of sinners; being a blasphemer; a persecuter; and injurious.

There may be morality, upon a circumscribed scale, where there is no religion; but there can be no religion, where there is no morality. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, is a rule which the christian will subscribe to, though there will not be in his life sufficient conformity to secure to him the charity of men of a different persuasion; for if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.

We will not take up further time now in considering what is the right way for us who are adults, but turn from ourselves to our little ones, if we have any; and inquire what is the right way for them.

As children, if they live, will soon fill the places of their parents, the same general rule is applicable to parents and children. But, during the years of minority, parents have the care, and direction, of their children, and are under obligation to the performance of various duties, which result from the relation which they sustain. This matter is fairly stated by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians: Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father.

Persons have very different ideas in regard to education, some, strongly recommending, what others as strongly reprobate. Can there be any decision of a question about which there is such a contrariety of opinion? The scriptures we profess to take as the standard of faith, and practice; and since their language is not yea, and nay; but always uniform, and intelligible, we may get instruction, to

be depended upon, from this source. Solomon says, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. David says, Come ye children; hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. These citations comport with the general precept respecting this matter, delivered by Moses to the people of Israel, and recorded in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house; and when thou walkest by the way; and when thou liest down; and when thou risest up. If this were not proper, would it have been commanded; and should we find so much said about it, in the scriptures?

Those who oppose the early religious instruction of children, to be consistent, ought to oppose the early efforts of husbandry; and put off, themselves, and advise others to put off, those labors which are usually performed in the spring, to a more advanced season of the year. That crop which requires the whole season to bring it to maturity, we know, cannot be expected, unless the whole season be improved. Knowledge, common, and religious, depends upon the cultivation of the mind in childhood, with as few exceptions, perhaps, as the harvest depends upon the cultivation of the earth in the spring. As to common knowledge, the truth is so obvious, that no one undertakes to dispute it; and all are governed in their practice by their own convictions. When however, religion is the object, the difficulty of explaining it to the apprehension of a child, is often the excuse for making no attempt.

But do not children, and very young children too, by the questions which they frequently propose, show their desire to be instructed; and their capacity to receive instruction; and if their questions are sometimes too great, and too difficult to be answered, might not something be said upon them?

Children listen with great attention to interesting narratives; and surely the Bible furnishes an abundant supply. The creation of the world: Eden and our first parents in innocence, in the garden: the fall of man, through the seduction of the serpent: the curse upon the whole creation, in

consequence of sin: the flood, and Noah's family sailing in safety over the tops of the mountains: the resettlement of the world: the impious project of building Babel, stopped by the confusion in the language of the builders: the calling of Abram with the wonderful things attending his life; the destruction of the cities of the plain, with the preservation of Lot; the bondage of Israel in Egypt, with their miraculous deliverance: their journey through the wilderness, fed upon manna, and guided by the cloud, and the pillar of fire; their establishment in the land of promise: the peculiarities of their original government: the state of their monarchy, with what led to its adoption: the building of the temple, with the manner of their worship: the revolt of the ten tribes; the prophets and the way in which they were treated: the various captivities, and their consequences: the coming of Christ; his character; his life; doctrines; miracles; death; resurrection and ascension: the day of pentecost: the destruction of Jerusalem: the calling of the Gentiles: the universal spread and influence of the gospel: the rising of the dead: the end of the world: the awful scenes of the judgment; and the retributions of eternity, in which the perfection of God's attributes will be seen in the sentence which he will pass upon his intelligent creatures; these are things, which if set before children, at a proper time, and in a proper manner, might be listened to with great avidity, and to great advantage. Timothy, from a child knew the holy scriptures, in which these things are contained; and he well rewarded the pious labors of his mother, and grandmother, in instructing him.

Much good might result to children, if their parents were faithful to keep them properly employed upon the sabbath, during all the hours of the day; and particularly, and especially, in the time of public worship; requiring of them some account of the discourse of the preacher, at the close of the service, and making the whole more intelligible by a more familiar exhibition. If instead of this, children are permitted to sleep away the hours of public worship, or spend them in play, they will be, it is likely, without some extraordinary interposition, forgetful hearers, instead of doers of the word, as long as they live.

Your excuse is like the fig leaf covering of our first parents, if you say, that since God must teach all those who have any understanding of divine things, your desires however sincere, and your endeavors, however diligently made, and constantly persevered in, will be altogether fruitless. Are we not, in all things, equally dependant; and yet do we not employ instruments, and use means, to accomplish our various purposes?

Can the physician heal us when we are sick? Is there any certain connexion between the medicine and the cure? shall we not live all the days of our appointed time, whatever we may do?

Parents have the charge of children, not only to instruct them, but to govern them, using such measures of coercion as prudence may dictate, to keep them from evil courses, and to incline them to such things, as in the most serious exercise of their reason, and in the most trying circumstances of their case, they will pronounce to be good. There can be no harm in their addressing to them, with whatever explanation may be necessary, the words of St. Paul to his Philippian brethren, Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise; think on these things.

Many people seem to think, that restraint cramps the mental faculties of a child; and they, of course, prefer persuasion, without using much, even of that, in any good cause. Solomon who in the day in which he lived was accounted a wise man; and who has been ever since so accounted, by all competent judges; has left us this, among his proverbs: He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. God says concerning Abraham, For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household, after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Joshua, having exhorted his countrymen to choose immediately, whom they would serve, gives them his own resolution in these words: But as for me, and my house we will serve the Lord. Respecting Abraham, and Joshua, it is evident, that they exercised the

authority connected with their stations, and enforced their commands whenever resistance was made to them.

The fourth commandment not only lays an obligation upon heads of families, to observe the Sabbath; but also makes them answerable for their children, and domestics; and even for their dumb animals. Had a child, or a servant, manifested a determination to work, or to play, upon the Sabbath, notwithstanding all advice, persuasion, and remonstrance, to the contrary, it would have been the duty of the heads of the house, to interpose with a prohibition, and, if that were disregarded, to punish the offender, as the circumstances of the case might make it practicable, or expedient.

Can we suppose that one precept was to be enforced, while with the other parts of the law, parental authority had no concern? If so, the young ruler, who was told, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, was not much out of the way, when he inquired Which? Eli had heavy judgments denounced against his house, for not restraining his sons, when they made themselves vile; and if he was so worthy of blame for not excluding them from the priesthood, when they were old enough to officiate; did he not depart still farther from his duty in bearing with their misconduct, at a more manageable age, in suffering them to spend the days of their childhood, under too lax, and indulgent a government?

If we want a tree to grow straight we are careful not to let the twig, from which we expect it, take a crooked direction. If the same method were adopted in the family, that is practised in the nursery, the same might be the effect. Childhood, and youth are vanity; and this vanity is frequently countenanced, and fostered, by those whose solemn charge requires, that they should counteract it. Such amusements as have no tendency but to keep the mind frivolous, appear to be thought as inseparable from young persons, as their stature, or their rosy, and unwrinkled cheek. Had St. Paul been of this opinion, he would have seen the impropriety of directing Titus to exhort young men to be soberminded. Whether a sober mind, breaks

up youthful intercourse, or operates like poison in the cup of youthful pleasure, those who possess such a mind, can best determine; and there are, in different places, at the présent time, persons enough of this description, to form a cloud of witnesses.

Where religion is out of the question, festivity, under some name and form, is almost invariably connected with the annual Thanksgiving; and with the beginning of the year; and I have been misinformed, if it was never connected, and among us too, with the Fast. This festivity is the subject of conversation for Sabbaths preceding, and succeeding, the day appointed for it; and thus there is a long train to the mischief. As for keeping a Fast in this manner, I have nothing to say, the incongruity is so monstrous, and so evident. But when the Psalmist wrote, Offer unto God Thanksgiving; is it probable that he would have advised to this method; or have approved of it, had it been suggested to him? A Thanksgiving is a religious festival, and whatever diverts the mind from religious meditation, or draws off the heart from religious exercise, should be carefully avoided. When we enter upon a new year, should we not make a solemn pause; looking backward; and forward; and considering what changes have taken place under our own observation; expect the like to follow; and realize that we may have ourselves a deep interest in them.

If any of you are disposed to make sport of what I have said, I refer you to a wiser man; and beg you to attend to the words of Solomon, as you may find them in the book of Ecclesiastes. I said of laughter it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it? Rejoice O young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart; and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

To religious instruction and government, parents are bound to add their prayers, for, and with, their children and to set before them an example worthy of imitation.

We now come to the last particular mentioned in the proclamation of Ezra; that is, a right way for his substance, and that of the people. We cannot know how we ought to

use what God has entrusted to us, unless we take our directions from his own mouth; that is his own Word.

From that source of information we learn, that a person has a right to make use of what he has, so far as his own comfort may require it. There is nothing better for a man than, that he should eat, and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw that it was from the hand of God. No immoderate indulgence is here recommended; but such as, is consistent with real enjoyment, and the highest sense of responsibility. We may have the necessaries; and even the accommodations of life, if our means will allow of them; and if we deny ourselves these, with the ability to procure them, we must have manifestly a higher object in view, or we shall not be doing our duty.

Next to ourselves, those are to be provided for, who are dependant upon us for support. If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house; he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. We ought to be much upon our guard here, lest we allow ourselves too great a latitude of interpretation, and thus infer from the Apostle's words what he never intended should be understood.

A parent may think he has a right to provide a large, and independent, estate, for each one of his children, and, that he is warranted by this passage, so to lay his plans, and manage his business, as to compass this object. This however is a task which, in most cases, is impracticable; and the state of things in the world will show us, that it is as improper as it is difficult of performance. Scarcely an instance can be found of a person, who has been in any manner benefited by the large inheritance which has come into his possession. Should we search the houses provided for the maintenance of the poor, we should probably find some persons of this description, among the incumbents upon the public bounty. There is no portion of scripture perhaps, which accords better to our own observation than these words of Solomon, There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, namely riches kept for the owners thereof, to

their hurt: But those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

The wealthy and the honorable, are generally those who started in life unknown, and unassisted, and who by industry, and good management, as the means, have increased their substance, and added to their weight of character, while others more highly favored have diminished or sunk to nothing, through indolence and a life of dissipation. Parents would do well not to be anxious to lay up a hoard for the establishment of their children, but be content to furnish them with comfortable food, and raiment, and the means of instruction; attending to their capacities; and propensities; and endeavoring to fit them for those places in society, for which they appear to have been intended.

For one the pulpit may be a fit place, for another a court of justice; for another a mechanic's shop; and for another the field, where labor is the honest and honorable occupation. There is as much difference in men as there is in beasts, and birds. All beasts have not the speed of the rein deer; nor the strength of the elephant, and all birds have not the eye of the hawk, nor the pinion of the eagle. All beasts, and birds, however, have their places, and their uses; and the same is the case with men.

As any thing may be spoiled by turning it to a use, for which it is not adapted; so a child may be rendered an useless member of the community, by thrusting him into a place which he has no qualifications to fill.

We have seen, that we may use our substance ourselves, and convert it to the support, and benefit, of our families: but there is a still farther use which requires our attention. As we have therefore opportunity, says, St. Paul to the Galatians, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. He here speaks the sentiment of all his inspired brethren, and he has the plain, and unquestionable warrant of his Lord.

The world has always had its poor, calling for the attention of persons placed in better circumstances. To the indolent and the sottish, however destitute, who scorn the service which we daily perform, we may shut up our bowels of compassion; and if we contribute at all, to their sup-

port, the case should be an urgent one. For such persons the best help that can be afforded, is a place to live, and an employment to take up their time. To do them good is to change their habits. It is the part of wisdom, and of duty at all times, to govern our conduct according to the circumstances in which we are called to act. If we are to have a special regard to the household of faith, in improving opportunities to do good, we are not disregarding the temporal wants, and sufferings, of our fellow men, to aim at their most important interest; and to endeavor to build up the kingdom of truth and righteousness in the world. There is nothing plainer in prophecy than, that this world, which has lain in wickedness from the fall of man, is to be restored, and that the gospel, which has been confined to the small portion of the human family, is to spread its light, and influence, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. God acts invisibly, employing second causes, to effect his purposes.

If he extends his gospel to all nations, and people, men must be the instruments, and, their substance must be the means. Wherever the Bible is sent, paper, and printing, will be indispensable; and whoever are employed to preach it, they must be fed, and clothed, and instructed, or they will not be able to teach others. For all these things expense must be incurred; and this expense must be met in the ordinary way; for it would be presumption to depend upon miracles in a day in which we see no miracles wrought; and have no encouragement to expect any.

Though little is done, compared with what ought to be done, and with what might be done; still the world was, probably, never so wide awake to righteousness, as at the present day. Among the many benevolent projects of a recent date, has one been suffered to come to a termination, through the deficiency of pecuniary support.

But my audience may think, that this address is misapplied, and plead that their substance is all taken up in supplying themselves, and their families, together with some little occasional assistance which they lend to the poor, in articles of food, and raiment. Let some things be here seriously considered.

What class of people, or what individual, has nothing to do with the direction, Honor the Lord with thy substance; and with the first fruits of all thine increase; and what class of people, or what individual, has nothing to do with the promise connected with this direction; So shall thy barns be filled with plenty; and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

How firmly established, and how widely spread, is Satan's kingdom in our ruined world; and how many, and how miserable, are his subjects? Moloch's name is to be found only in history; but abominations like those, which were anciently united with his worship, present now a sad, and heart affecting spectacle. If you saw children thrown by their parents into a river, would you not be astonished at this want of parental affection; or at this infatuation; and plunge in yourselves, to save them from drowning? If you saw such little helpless creatures hanging upon the trees, where they must perish with hunger, or be devoured by the birds of prey, would you not instantly fly to their relief; and do all in your power to provide for their future safety? If you saw men, or women, lying in the road, where they must be crushed to death under the wheels of a monstrous carriage, unless speedily removed, would you not hasten to stop the carriage, or to raise the prostrate victims?

Though you are not spectators of such things, they actually exist, and others, not less horrible; and there is no way of curing the evil but by imparting religious instruction to the deluded people. This is an effectual cure; for as great things, with the exception of miracles, have attended the preaching of the gospel in heathen lands, in our own times, and quite lately, as were produced by the same cause in Samaria, when Philip exposed, and broke up the bewitching sorcery of Simon. Whole nations have given up their idol gods; and the stupid worship connected with them; and are now engaged in that reasonable service which it has ever been our privilege to perform.

If what the heathen need is the gospel, who shall send it to them? Many, more able, and perhaps, as many, less able, than we are, are coming forward with their contributions. No one would have blamed the widow, if she had

withheld her two mites from the treasury, when in a case less urgent, the rich were casting in their offerings; but, that she was not left to want we may be sure from the record of her charity; and of her confidence in God.

As the vine dresser thinks it no damage, but a great benefit to prune his vines of their superfluous branches; so we should lose nothing, but gain much, were we to remove from ourselves those things which owe their existence to our pride; which tend only to increase our pride; and the expense of which, if spared would form a fund sufficient to answer all important calls. Many things might be named which are no more essential to our support, and comfort, than the play things of a child, and these are generally, the things for which we pay the most. In the same divine volume in which we read, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; we read, Be ye not conformed to this world. Were we to take heed to this latter precept, our substance would increase, and be like the overflowing Nile, whose waters allow of being drained off, for the supply of all the adjacent country.

We have now gone through with the proclamation of Ezra, and will conclude our discourse with a brief notice of some things good, and evil, as we are respected. The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places; and we have a goodly heritage. Our own country has always yielded a sufficiency for the wants of the people; and generally, a very great surplus.

While Europe has been the theatre of war, and the slaughter house of mankind, here peace has reigned from the settlement of our original ancestors, with a very few years of interruption.

While men have been born kings in other parts of the earth, we have chosen our own rulers, and displaced them at our pleasure.

While men have almost every where been involved in the grossest darkness, respecting the things of another world, the bright, and morning star, the Sun of righteousness has ever shed his enlivening beams upon this land, and multitudes have, in the highest, and most important sense, experien-

ced the loving kindness of the Lord. These are among the good things. What things must be set down as evil?

Because of swearing the land mourneth. Profane language is not the language of the sailor and of the soldier only; the privilege of using it is claimed equally, by the gentleman; and sometimes by his lady; and sometimes by the professor of christianity. Laws are enacted to prevent swearing, by the punishment of the swearer. Will laws ever be necessary to punish men for sweeping chimneys; or for daubing themselves with the mire, and uncleanness of the streets?

Intemperance is a crying sin, of which as a nation, we are guilty. If the tax gatherers could gather up all that is unnecessarily, spent, for the purchase of intoxicating liquor, all the demands of the government would be satisfied, and there would be much of the people's money in the treasury. Though this is a place, not noted for tippling practices, there is, probably, enough sold here, of various kinds of liquor, beyond what is useful, to amount to more than three times the compensation which I receive from the town.

The profanation of the Sabbath is a matter which deserves serious consideration. Though there are laws to prevent it, it is not prevented. To pass by other things, the mail is carried upon the Sabbath, not only with the countenance, but by the order of the government; and the stages are filled with passengers, who in riding follow their own dictates. Whether any thing of this is necessary in war, is at least very questionable; and, that it is not necessary in peace, is too apparent, to allow of a dispute. When piety takes the lead in our councils, proper regulations will be adopted. If the ordinary occupations of life can be suspended upon the sabbath, all communications respecting them, might be suspended likewise.

Duelling is another sin very common among us, and of which we have lately, had a peculiarly awful instance. Either the laws with regard to this enormity are deficient in their penalties; or the execution of them is dispensed with, from motives of false delicacy, and of false honor. If killing is murder when the act of killing is a premeditated act, ought not the duelist to be pursued as the murderer is, by

the officers of justice, and brought to the same disgraceful execution? How many lives would be saved were such a course to be adopted? The day may come when from motives of the purest benevolence, such a remedy may be prescribed for an evil, incurable by common means.

That slavery should exist in a land of freedom, and, that the slave trade should be carried on as it is, against the most positive prohibitions, calls for our humiliation. The national character is not sufficiently conformed to the principles, and spirit, of the religion of Christ, or such inhumanity could not be practised for thus runs the precept given to regulate our conduct one with another, Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. There is no one who would be willing to be a slave and to be sold, and treated like the cattle.

To come home to our own affairs my brethren, how is it with us? We have shared in national blessings. Have we thankfully received them, and faithfully improved them? Is it not the observation of every one among us, who makes any serious observation, that it is, and long has been, a time of great stupidity with us? He cannot be thankful for any favor, who is not thankful for the unspeakable gift, for he cannot have a sense of obligation for a small favor; who has none for a great one. The work of God is going on in many places, and the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto us. How are we affected by the prospect? In a time of distressing drought, when every green thing is withered, we anxiously watch the rise, and motion, of the clouds; and when we see the rain descending upon the territory of some neighboring people, we long to partake with them in the blessing of the shower. Are showers of grace of less consequence than showers of rain? May God grant us both; according as he shall see us to need.

SERMON X.

FAST SERMON.

MATTHEW xxiv, 14.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

WE can easily find what gives rise to that discourse of our Savior of which these words are a part, if we look back, and see how this chapter begins. And Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? This question of the disciples, and the predictions consequent upon it, of which St. Matthew gives us an account, are in substance recorded also by two other evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke.

It is supposed by some, that the disciples meant by the end of the world, the termination of that dispensation; though the Greek is literally rendered in our translation, and though their ideas, if they had any, must have been very obscure concerning any dispensation different from the one under which they had lived. It is supposed by others, that the Jews, in general, and the disciples, because they were Jews, entertained an opinion, that the destruction of the temple, and the destruction of the world, would take place

the officers of justice, and brought to the same disgraceful execution? How many lives would be saved were such a course to be adopted? The day may come when from motives of the purest benevolence, such a remedy may be prescribed for an evil, incurable by common means.

That slavery should exist in a land of freedom, and, that the slave trade should be carried on as it is, against the most positive prohibitions, calls for our humiliation. The national character is not sufficiently conformed to the principles, and spirit, of the religion of Christ, or such inhumanity could not be practised for thus runs the precept given to regulate our conduct one with another, Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. There is no one who would be willing to be a slave and to be sold, and treated like the cattle.

To come home to our own affairs my brethren, how is it with us? We have shared in national blessings. Have we thankfully received them, and faithfully improved them? Is it not the observation of every one among us, who makes any serious observation, that it is, and long has been, a time of great stupidity with us? He cannot be thankful for any favor, who is not thankful for the unspeakable gift, for he cannot have a sense of obligation for a small favor; who has none for a great one. The work of God is going on in many places, and the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto us. How are we affected by the prospect? In a time of distressing drought, when every green thing is withered, we anxiously watch the rise, and motion, of the clouds; and when we see the rain descending upon the territory of some neighboring people, we long to partake with them in the blessing of the shower. Are showers of grace of less consequence than showers of rain? May God grant us both; according as he shall see us to need.

SERMON X.

FAST SERMON.

MATTHEW xxiv, 14.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

WE can easily find what gives rise to that discourse of our Savior of which these words are a part, if we look back, and see how this chapter begins. And Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? This question of the disciples, and the predictions consequent upon it, of which St. Matthew gives us an account, are in substance recorded also by two other evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke.

It is supposed by some, that the disciples meant by the end of the world, the termination of that dispensation; though the Greek is literally rendered in our translation, and though their ideas, if they had any, must have been very obscure concerning any dispensation different from the one under which they had lived. It is supposed by others, that the Jews, in general, and the disciples, because they were Jews, entertained an opinion, that the destruction of the temple, and the destruction of the world, would take place

at the same time, so durable the materials, and so firm the construction of the temple, appeared to them to be. If they could indulge such an opinion, their pride must account for it, for they knew that Solomon's temple had been destroyed. Upon this supposition however, their question must have a two fold reference, and it is apparent, that the answer of Christ to it, relates to two events, somewhat similar in their nature, but quite distant each from the other, in their accomplishment.

From the following passage we should not suppose, that he was speaking, at all, of the end of the world, but only of occurrences soon to be witnessed. Verily I say unto you, 'This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled. From this passage we may learn his primary meaning. But the transition was so easy, and natural, from the awful destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish community, to the dissolution of the world, that both are brought into view in the same discourse. For proof of this, what follows is thought to be sufficient. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light: And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory: And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

To understand this subject the different accounts should be compared. It is attested beyond all dispute, that the gospel was preached throughout the Roman empire, and in every part of the world known at that time, before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jewish community broken up, and scattered. Thus the prophecy was accomplished, in one sense, almost eighteen hundred years ago; though not in the most important and extensive sense. With respect to its ultimate reference, it is not yet fulfilled, but looks to a future day for its complete accomplishment. My intention in taking up this passage is to endeavor to explain it, in its several parts, giving it that interpretation in which we ourselves are most interested, and considering the end here spoken of to be the end,

not of the Jewish community, but the end of human affairs, the end of the world.

What we are to take notice of, in the first place, is the gospel, which is here mentioned. We ordinarily, understand, by the gospel that history which the four evangelists have given us of the life of Jesus Christ. But the gospel was preached to Abraham, and of course it is far more ancient than the evangelical history; for that was not written until long after Abraham was dead. The import of the term gospel is good tidings, or glad tidings.

The expression which our Savior uses in the text is, This gospel. We know that this, and that, are very significant terms, and point out things either essentially, or circumstantially, different. St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, says, I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another. Gospel was the name which had been given to that collection of doctrines which the false teachers had inculcated among the Galatian brethren, but it was a very different thing from the gospel which Paul had preached; and being deficient, in every particular, it was altogether undeserving of the same name. What good tidings, what tidings adapted to gladden the heart, can we find in that gospel of which the apostle speaks in such strong language of reprobation? The gospel which he preached himself will bear the closest examination; and the more we examine it the more sensible shall we be, that every thing contained in the name belongs to the system of doctrines with which it is connected.

There must be a God and that revelation which exhibits him in his true character, deserves to be called the gospel; because the knowledge of God is of all things the most important, and delightful. The gods of the heathen are vanity and a lie; and a mutilated character of the true God, that is a character which does not embrace all his attributes in one perfect assemblage, is no better. In what is said of God in the gospel with which we are favored, there is neither deficiency, nor redundancy; but every thing is as it should be; and if we understand it, we shall rejoice, and be disposed to say, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him!

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The gospel is farther glad tidings, because we may all see in it what we are; the picture drawn of human nature, being the exact likeness of each individual. Though the sight of sin is a dreadful sight, the sinner never feels so comfortable as when he beholds himself in all his deformity, and can say with Job, I abhor myself. With respect to this gospel it may also be added that the name is very appropriate, and significant, because it makes known the purpose of God to save sinners. If we had not this information, could we have any at all suited to our case, any good tidings; any tidings which could make our hearts truly glad? Business, or amusements, might take up so much of our time, that we should have but little leisure for the consideration of the close of life, and the consequences of leaving the world; but any enjoyment which might come in this way, ought to be accounted rather negative, than positive, rather nominal, than real. To such a case the words of Solomon would be very applicable. Even in laughter the heart is scornful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The criminal under the sentence of death might sing and dance but who could believe him to be happy. This gospel would be glad tidings, even upon the supposition that the salvation which it proposes could be obtained only by a few, especially if every one might hope to be included in the small number. The case however is far otherwise. Whether many or few, comparatively, will be saved, is a question which was once put without receiving any direct answer, and it is a question of vain and unprofitable curiosity. Of this we are assured, that Christ tasted death for every man, and his salvation is called both great and common. If millions of sinners have applied before me, and if my sins are more in number than the moments of my life, I still have the greatest encouragement to apply myself, and the highest authority for concluding, that no earnest application will be refused. If the doctrine of universal salvation is a doctrine of devils, being a doctrine of falsehood, it is unquestionably true, that the offer of salvation is universal; no limitation being connected with it; and the condition being in all cases the same.

According to the maxims of common prudence, we inquire what a thing will cost before we determine that we will have it; and here, to increase in our view the importance of the tidings of the gospel, let us remember, that salvation is the purchase of the Lamb of God; and that upon all those who receive it, it is bestowed as a free gift. Those who have no money are invited to come, and buy wine, and milk, without money, and without price. Christ told the disciples of John, The poor have the gospel preached to them. The poor, the great class in the community, must despair of salvation, if like other things, it must be paid for, and the rich have a double inducement to attend to it from the consideration, that what they have they may retain; and that nothing is required of them, but a wise arrangement, and improvement. The gospel is still farther glad tidings because it tells us of a salvation which is deliverance from sin, both as to the condemnation of it, and the power. Whoever has felt like David when he said, Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, is sensible that no change in outward circumstances is, by any means, of so much importance, as a change of the heart; such as will constitute it new, and holy. It may be added to what has been said, that the gospel is glad tidings because salvation is the sum of good; because godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Without a revelation we should know nothing of a future state, nor of any good but what is to be found in the visible, transitory, and disappointing, objects of the present world. Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving; but the whole creation would be nothing to him, who should have nothing better for his portion.

The second thing which we have to consider is the kingdom, for the gospel here spoken of, to characterise it still farther, is called this gospel of the kingdom.

In every kingdom we expect to find a king, and, in ordinary cases, we can know his name, his parentage, his place of residence, and his general character. There is a king at the head of this kingdom concerning which we are

now inquiring, and we can say something about him from the information which he has imparted to us. The king is God himself, known under many names, all having some appropriate signification. Time would be unnecessarily spent at present in collecting these names; though they well deserve our serious attention. Mysterious as it may be to us however, we must not forget, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are among the names which belong to the one true God. Though we can trace the parentage of other kings, this King is without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; self-existent, and everlasting. Kings have their royal cities, and their palaces, built at great expense, and abounding with decorations; but the King of kings dwells in the highest heavens, and is present every where. Kings are usually arbitrary, despotic rulers, proud of their authority, and regardless of the rights of their subjects; but this king is the high and holy One of Israel; and the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre.

Kings have subjects, more or less numerous, and of different descriptions; the honorable, and the vile. The subjects of this king are a multitude which no man can number; and though they are not all alike, they differ only as one star differeth from another star in glory. Cherubim, and seraphim, are names given to the high orders of holy beings, but we can have no very clear and distinct idea of their meaning. We talk sometimes of archangels, though it is doubtful whether this is proper, because the bible mentions only one of this name, who is the angel of the covenant, the Son of God. What is especially interesting for us to know is, who of our race, will be allowed to be subjects of this kingdom. It is no uncommon thing for men of the world, when speaking of the death of their friends, to say, without any regard to their character, that they are gone to heaven. But the Bible is the only standard by which we can form a correct judgment. Let us then appeal to it. Know ye not says St. Paul, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor

drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

If we had only this passage upon the subject, persons not chargeable with any gross immoralities, might draw up a conclusion too favorable with respect to themselves. But there are other passages in abundance, and they ought all to be consulted. Our Savior's discourse with Nicodemus, recorded in the third chapter of St. John's gospel, contains so much, that we need look no farther for information. If a man cannot see the kingdom of heaven without being born again, we deceive ourselves, if we expect to become subjects of that kingdom in any other way.

Kingdoms have their laws, the character of which depends upon the state of society, being in some cases little else than the will of an unlimited monarch; and in others discovering that the welfare of the community has been consulted by those who enacted them. But whether more or less arbitrary, they operate only as external regulations, and they are considered as obeyed when the conduct is in accordance with them. The kingdom of God has its laws, and God is the sole author of them. Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Yet though God, in the laws which he has given, has regarded his own glory as the ultimate object, the good of the intelligent universe, and of every individual, is secured, only, by obedience to them. All these laws have this peculiarity, that in addition to conformity in outward things, they require, and primarily, the conformity of the heart. Love only can fulfil the laws of God, for he requires of each one, love supreme to himself, and subordinate to all intelligent beings.

In every kingdom, and in every community, men have their occupations, differing according to their capacities, and circumstances, but in the kingdom of God, the same employment engages all; and that is the praise of God; for as for the natural world there is a natural body; so for the spiritual world there is a spiritual body. Thus the whole

man becomes a pure spirit; and what he has to do is to be done with spiritual faculties, and in a way of spiritual exercise.

Kingdoms have their location and boundaries. The kingdom of God ruleth over all. It is in heaven, and it is set up in this world, for every one of Adam's race who is ever received, must be received while an inhabitant of this world.

We mention as the last particular, under this head, that while other kingdoms have their beginning, and their termination, this kingdom is everlasting. No convulsions can overturn this kingdom which is built upon the rock of ages.

We learn from the text in the third place, that this gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world. Though so much was done in the early days of christianity that this prophecy might be viewed as then fulfilled, it is necessary, that the work be done over again; for generally speaking, darkness now covers the earth and gross darkness the people. The success which attended the preaching of the gospel at first, is to be accounted for from that miraculous power which was conferred upon the apostles. But the days of miracles are past; and what we look for now is from the blessing of God upon the ordinary operation of second causes. It is easy then to sketch out with some particularity, how this business will proceed.

Ever since the language of men was confounded, at the building of Babel, there have been different languages in the world, and so different as to greatly embarrass the intercourse of different nations. Hence it is apparent, that wherever the gospel shall be preached, with any considerable advantage, it must be translated into the language of those to whom it is addressed; for the progress must be slow if nothing could be communicated but through an interpreter. Schools must likewise be established, that as many as can, and especially the young, may be taught to understand the language of those who preach the gospel to them. These are the measures already adopted, and with great encouragement, in all places where missionary labors have been performed.

Preachers of the gospel will be necessary likewise; and as none can understand this business, who have not themselves been taught of God, and qualified by his grace, we have reason to expect, that the spirit will be poured out from on high, and that many will be converted to the faith. The scriptures abound with predictions upon which we may found such an expectation, and in those latter days of the world, there has been a wonderful fulfilment of these predictions. If tares should be found in the field, as doubtless tares will be sown in abundance, while we are warranted in saying, an enemy hath done this, we may add with equal assurance, he that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the good seed are the children of the kingdom. Though revivals of religion in general, are by no means to be compared with what took place at the day of pentecost, with respect to the steadfastness, and perseverance, of the great body of the subjects, we may see enough unless blinded by prejudice to induce us to say, This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Many new churches have of late been formed, and great accessions have been made to churches established in former years, and though the ages of the persons have been very various, the majority has been made up of the young including both sexes.

A graceless person, however otherwise endowed, is essentially deficient for the business of preaching the gospel; but the person who has grace, needs also information; and when miraculous gifts are not imparted, he must give himself to study, who would be an able instructor. It is necessary therefore, that those young converts who enter into the ministry should receive an education, and something more is requisite than in ordinary cases, for such as go into foreign countries. Of course we may look for an increasing attention to this subject. To supply the world with the Bible, in the many languages which are in use, and to furnish a sufficient number of persons duly prepared to preach it, great expense must be incurred; and for a considerable time at least, it must fall principally on christian nations. For means reliance must be placed upon the liberality of individuals, and the more systematic efforts of charitable associations. Selfish as this world is, since God has said,

the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, we may be sure he can fill his own treasury with the voluntary contributions of various descriptions of people.

But every country has some kind of government; and before the gospel can be introduced any where, permission must be obtained of those who occupy the highest places of authority. Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, is language very natural to be used by heathen rulers towards christian teachers; and such may be the hostility of feeling, that the most prudent human management cannot overcome it. The case however is never to be viewed as hopeless. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he turneth it whithersoever he will. Thus the greatest reluctance may be subdued; and the most violent opposition brought to nothing, by an overruling influence, altogether consistent with the freedom of moral action.

For this way a great door, and effectual, may be opened to let in God's messengers into the different kingdoms of the earth, even before the kings are themselves converted; for Cyrus issued his proclamation, giving permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild their temple, though there is no evidence, that he ever renounced idolatry, and became a worshipper of the true God: and Constantine did so much to favor christianity, that his reign forms an era in the history of the church, and yet it remains a doubtful matter whether he was truly a child of God. But if rulers should in any way, and from any consideration be induced to suffer the gospel to be preached among their subjects, the preaching of it would be like casting seed upon a rock, unless the hearts of the people should be prepared by the grace of God to receive it. As God who sent Moses and Aaron to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, sent them not in vain, but accomplished, through their instrumentality, his gracious and glorious purpose, so we may expect, that he will go every where with those whom he sends to preach his gospel, and crown with success all their sincere endeavors to build up his kingdom.

The fourth thing to be taken notice of is, that the preaching of the gospel is to be a witness unto all nations. We

are therefore to inquire what is the meaning of this expression. Witness, in the first place, will be exhibited against the wickedness of the nations, according to their different circumstances, as to principles, and practices. Concerning this matter we may suppose, that where the gospel does not give information, there is a great degree of insensibility.

The polytheism of the pagan world has been as tenaciously adhered to, as any system of religion, however rational and well founded; but when it comes to be examined in the light of truth, and brought to the test of the gospel, the stupid worshippers of idols will discover, that the object of their worship are vanity and a lie, and, that they that made them are like unto them, and their language will be, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit; shall a man make gods unto himself and they are no gods? It is surely among the things to be wondered at, that the reason of man should ever become so perverted, that visible things, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and even reptiles, and stocks, and stones, should be thought suitable objects of worship; but there can be no doubt of the fact. The language of Isaiah was applicable to his own times, and it is equally applicable now. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire, yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination, shall I fall down to the stock of a tree.

If the worship of false gods consisted only in the prostration of the body, however criminal that might be, the criminality would be far less than it now is, for the sacrifices are to be taken into the account; and these are of the most detestable, and diabolical character; such as the burning of widows upon the funeral pile of their husbands; the drowning, and starving, of infants; and the destruction of a multitude of lives, in various ways; so that the ground is covered to a great extent, with the bodies, or with the bones, of the victims. We must be better acquainted with paganism to enter very minutely into a description of it, but we may

venture to say, that it abounds with flagrant impiety, and immorality, and, that the day is coming when this will be the judgment of all mankind concerning it.

The Mahometans make their prophet their idol, and the Koran their guide; and this system of religion, if it be proper to call such an imposture a system of religion, has been spread far and wide, by its sensual allurements, and by the victorious arms of its propagators. However disposed this description of people may at present be, to call those infidels who differ from them, the gospel bears witness against their wickedness, and there will be a time when they will be sensible of it.

Popery is a species of adulterated christianity, which, as well as Mahometanism, was set up in the beginning of the seventh century, and, like that delusion, it has covered a vast extent of territory, and carried away a multitude of people. Those who have embraced it have for the most part taken it for granted, being kept in ignorance, as the best method to answer the purpose intended. When this ignorance shall give place to knowledge, and the Bible shall be read understandingly, by the people, Popery will appear in its true character, and with all its deformity. The wickedness connected with popery may be seen in the Bible; and particularly in the second chapter of St. Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, from which I give you the following extract; Let no man deceive you by no means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth, and exalteth, himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. This Man of sin, this son of perdition, is not an individual, but the Pope, whoever he may be, or Popery, with all the falsehoods, and iniquities, which it embraces. If the papists worship the virgin Mary, they do what the wise men of the east never thought of doing, and if they go to the Pope for the pardon of their sins, this is a question which they have either never seen, or never duly considered, Who can forgive sins but God only.

The descendants of God's ancient people Jews and Israelites are so widely dispersed that perhaps there is scarcely a country upon earth which does not contain some of them; and differing from all other people, their sins are of a peculiar cast. You only have I known of all the families of the earth, says God by the prophet Amos, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. The history of this people we have from their first appearance until their final and complete dispersion; and we can see what blessings were bestowed upon them, and how they insulted and abused the Giver of them all.

They were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, guided, and guarded, through the wilderness, and established in the land of promise, where they had a goodly heritage. The miracles which were wrought in their behalf are too well recollected to require a particular recital. The Theocracy which was their first form of government, was a government administered by God; and such as no other people ever lived under; and when they rejected him, and clamorously demanded a king, that they might be like other nations, they were placed under a kingly government and prospered whenever they were in any measure obedient. God distinguished them by bestowing upon them a written revelation, and by sending his servants the prophets to instruct them. This revelation they corrupted by mingling with it their own traditions, and these prophets they persecuted, and killed. In the fulness of time the Son of God appeared himself in the world, and came to this people, who on account of their covenant standing, might be called his own; but because he did not answer their expectations of the Messiah, because he did not ascend the throne of David, and wield the sceptre, setting them at liberty from the Roman yoke, and rendering them victorious over all their temporal enemies, they could see no form, nor comeliness, in him, but rejected him; procured his condemnation, and nailed him to the cross.

For all these acts of wickedness, and especially for the last, which crowned the whole, they have been for many ages in a state of rejection; and what is the greatest of their evils, they have been ignorant of the cause. The preach-

ing of the gospel among them is to be a witness to them, and so convincing will it be, by the accompanying grace of God, that the whole nation will mourn as Peter did when he went out and wept bitterly.

If the preaching of the gospel is to be a witness to all nations, doubtless it is to be, among the rest, to the christian nations, and that on account of the wickedness which belongs to them. It is certainly a rule of equity, that much should be required of those, to whom much has been committed. It would be a long labor to make out a list of the sins with which christian nations stand chargeable. Our present enumeration will extend only to a few particulars.

Let us begin with false doctrines. Those only who embrace false doctrines will doubt of their existence, and of their circulation, for every thing must be false which will not compare with the standard of the scriptures.

There are those who pretend to believe in Universal salvation; and there are those who undertake to preach it from the Bible, taking insulated, and mutilated passages, and putting upon them a forced construction. The first text which was used to inculcate this doctrine was, 'Thou shalt not surely die; and the first preacher who used it for this purpose was satan, lurking in the serpent; and with so much subtilty, and dexterity, did he manage, that he seduced our original mother, and brought ruin upon the world. The origin of this doctrine is sufficient of itself to render it, at least, suspected; for can it be supposed, that the father of lies would ever speak the truth; and especially, when endeavoring to accomplish an object so consonant with his own vicious and malicious propensities? We may add, that if this doctrine be true, revelation is unnecessary, for if all are to be saved, salvation is made certain to all, and revelation has nothing to do with it. We may add also, that if this doctrine be true, the Bible is full of contradictions, for it contains a multitude of passages so plain, and so decidedly against it, that the most ingenious sophistry, when it undertakes to explain them, like the counsel of Abithophel, is turned unto foolishness.

We may mention also among false doctrines that which, differing in name more than in character, from the doctrine which we have now been considering, is sometimes called Unitarianism; sometimes Liberal christianity; and sometimes Fashionable religion. These names will not be objected to, because they are used to designate this doctrine by those who think favorably of it. As I have heard many say they do not understand this doctrine; and as I have had considerable opportunity, from books, and from conversation to become acquainted with it myself, I will attempt to make a brief statement of it.

Though there are some shades of difference, there is nothing essentially different, among those who embrace this doctrine; for they do not any of them acknowledge, that it is proper to honor the Son even as we ought all to honor the Father; nor do they believe in human depravity, as universal, and total; nor do they hold the doctrine of regeneration; nor do they admit that justification comes by faith; nor do they say any thing about religious experience, or what amounts to, taste, and see that the Lord is good, nor do they seem to be sensible, that there is any great difference in the conditions of men in the eternal world. If this is a fair representation, and I say, without any hesitation, that it is, more especially at the present time, must not this be false doctrine, and must it not be wicked to adopt it?

Observe what St. Peter has said about it in the second chapter of his second epistle. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies; even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. What are these damnable heresies which bring swift destruction? The apostle has not employed modern names, but he has written in language most definite, and descriptive, for they who deny the Lord that bought them, are the very persons who deny all the things which have been mentioned.

Other false doctrines must be past by for want of time to take notice of them. We shall now proceed to other matters.

Christian nations ought to have christian rulers; and such they may have when they choose for themselves, and when such rulers can be obtained. Though I admit that every christian is not fit to be a ruler, I maintain that neither is every infidel fit, if the same disqualifications be regarded in both; and that the preference should not be given to infidels when christians can be obtained equally well qualified, or at least, sufficiently well qualified, for the station contemplated.

We may imagine that there is a christian land, in which there are many candidates for the same civil office, and that a very important one; and, that when one of these candidates is singled out, as having a prominent claim to promotion, it is said, to distinguish him in a moral point of view from the rest, that his hands had never been stained with the blood of a fellow creature, slain in single combat. Whether it can be said, when a people are brought into such a dilemma, that they are aware of the difference between faith and unbelief, and are seeking for such men to rule over them as they ought to appoint, can hardly be made a question; for it is expressly commanded in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy to the people of Israel, and of course to all other people, Thou shalt in any wise set him over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose.

That such a blot as this is upon the character of the christian world, even where that character is the fairest, is too well known to require proof.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men, is an injunction binding, not only upon individuals, but upon nations likewise, and of course, all offensive war is strictly prohibited, and all war which is not absolutely unavoidable. Yet war has been a trade, in all ages of the world; and christian nations have had their share in it, and still keep their weapons of death, not for curiosity, but for use; and though they execute upon the gallows the individual who murders another individual, they call it a glorious achievement to obtain a victory, and to cover the field of battle with the slain. If malice prepense constitute murder in a man, why not in a nation? Whatever may be thought of the persons who compose the army of the victor,

or of the vanquished, the deeds of the nation are to be judged of by national motives.

God made the beasts to do our drudgery and placed us over them for this purpose; but he has not permitted one man to make a beast of burden of another, and to dispose of him as he might of lands, and chattels. Christian nations however, not satisfied with lawful commerce, make merchandise of men, and the number of those degraded beings who have been bought and sold, since this business was begun, is too great for any one to tell what is the amount of it.

In vain is it to plead the permission which the Israelites had to buy the heathen, and hold them as slaves, for we must show our permission to do the same thing, before the same thing will be lawful for us. An exception to the law does not destroy the general obligation of the law.

The things which have been mentioned will serve as specimens of the wickedness of different nations; and against those things, and against all wickedness, the preaching of the gospel will be a witness.

The preaching of the gospel is to be, secondly, a witness to all nations, of God's purpose of grace, and love, to the world, in the gift of his Son. So much time has been taken up in the consideration of the preceding article, that this must be briefly discussed.

This witness will be given among other things in that glorious agreement which there will appear to be between the different inspired writers, and between all the parts of that revelation which is contained in the Bible. Then the language of David will be the language of mankind, Thy Word is true from the beginning. It is indeed a wonderful affair, that so many men; in so many ages; in so many places; in such different circumstances; and with such different mental cultivation, should be so harmonious; pointing to the same thing; and handling the same subject in such a manner, that though we want what they have all written for instruction, yet we may learn from almost, if not quite, any one, what is essential to salvation. The ancient dispensation was comparatively dark, but sufficiently luminous, for God's people lived, and died, under it; and types, and

shadows, answered well their purpose. These types, and shadows pointed to Christ, and so did what the prophets wrote, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The four evangelists who have written the history of our Savior's life, are so agreed, that no candid reader finds any thing to object to, and yet the history contains abundant proof, that there was no consultation between them in writing it. The epistles to the churches are not made up of discordant sentiments, but inculcate the same things, and and breathe the same spirit. No one who is sensible of this harmony, will attempt to account for it upon any common principles.

This witness will farther be seen when it shall be seen that God has, exactly fulfilling every prediction, actually founded Zion, that he has set up a kingdom which may be called a kingdom of righteousness, and his own kingdom, in the world. The church is, by the great body of mankind, considered as a society formed for secular, and sinister purposes, regarded with hatred, and scorn, and judged of by the most scandalous conduct of its most scandalous members. We expect the time to come when more candour will be exercised.

It will be seen hereafter and acknowledged, that civilization, and the arts, and the comforts of civilized life, are to be numbered among the fruits of christianity. It will be seen and acknowledged that christianity has done away the ferocity of the savage, that it has cured the knave of his dishonesty; that it has brought the debauchee to sobriety, and temperance; that it has terminated the feuds of the contentious; and made the advocate for war to seek the things which make for peace: and in fine that such a change has been effected by its influence in the affairs of men, that it ought not to be considered as the language of exaggeration to say, there are new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But as he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, so when the gospel shall be preached in such a manner as to be a witness to all nations, all who receive it, will find the witness in the altered state of their own minds, and hearts, and lives. They will find it true

in a great degree, that their vain thoughts no longer lodge within them; that they are taken up in the contemplation of new, sublime, and divine subjects; that they are contented with their condition; thankful for their mercies, humble for their sins; patient under their sufferings; delighted with the service of God, and strengthened for the performance of it; pleased with the company of God's people; forgiving towards enemies; and benevolent towards all: benefited by the exercises of prayer, and of praise; willing to live all the days of their appointed time until their change come, and possessed of no distressing apprehension about the hour of dissolution, firmly believing, that when absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord, and disposed to say in the triumphant language of the apostle, He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also, freely give us all things?

Should this be called rant, and rhapsody, or by any other name expressive of contempt, I have no doubt that it falls as much short of what will be realized at a future day, and indeed of what has been already realized, in ten thousand instances, as what the queen of Sheba heard about Solomon in her own country, fell short of what she saw and heard when she visited him in his kingdom. Testimony however various, and powerful, has but little weight with him, who has not the witness in himself, when the subject of religion is concerned.

The fifth and last thing in this passage requiring our attention is thus expressed, And then shall the end come. If there is a propriety however in the interpretation which has now been put upon this passage, and the end here spoken of is the end of the world, some important things will take place after the time when the gospel shall be preached in all the world, before the end shall actually come.

The expectation has been generally entertained, not only by divines, but also by the church of God, that there would be a period in time which it would be proper to call the Millenium, or the thousand years, by way of distinction, and this expectation is founded on scripture testimony. Take the following passage from the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, And I saw an angel come down from heav-

en, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent, which is the devil, and satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit; and shut him up; and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled. This is figurative language, but does it not obviously mean, as is expressed in another part of the same book, that the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, that the nations of the earth shall, for a thousand years, cease to be disturbed by that enemy who is the present god of this world; and that sin shall receive during this period, an effectual check?

When such a state of things shall be brought about, the pursuits and practices of mankind will be very different from what they have ever generally been. St. James has inquired, Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, which war in your members? If ever these lusts shall be subdued by the grace of God, then wars and fightings will come to an end, as a natural and necessary consequence. Those who conclude, that this world will always be a world of warfare, because it always has been since sin was introduced, draw their conclusions from wrong premises; for if they traced the evil to the cause, they would see, that if the cause should be done away, the evil would be done away with it. Is any prophecy delivered in plainer and more intelligible language than the following? And he shall judge among many nations; and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Let those who would be wise above what is written, and who maintain that wars are as necessary as winds, and as much to be expected as volcanoes, and earthquakes, remember, that he who is wiser than they, and who has declared the end from the beginning, has spoken differently upon the subject.

In addition to the great blessing of peace among the nations, to be enjoyed at the period which we are contemplating, we are informed that the work of mankind will be

righteousness, and, that what is of the greatest importance will be the object of their attention and pursuit. A quotation from Zachariah will be sufficient for this particular. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. It was observed, that this happy condition of things is to continue a thousand years. Something very different may then be expected to take place. We have made one quotation from the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, and now we add another. And when the thousand years are expired, satan shall be loosed out of his prison; And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. Gog and Magog are described by Ezekiel, as enemies who are to make an attack upon the land of Israel in the latter days; and Gog and Magog, mentioned by St. John, who are to appear at a still later period, may be the same nations combined with other enemies, or only such enemies as will resemble them in character. It may be thought strange that such a time of wickedness should succeed such a time of holiness; but we are to remember that as holiness belongs not to our nature, but is produced by the operation of the Spirit upon the hearts of individuals, so the most wicked generation may be born of the most holy parents. This is clearly possible, and God may suffer it to be so, to answer the wise and important purposes of his government. It appears that this is the last effort which satan will make, and that it is immediately to precede the resurrection of the dead, and the final conflagration.

Of these events the Bible gives us descriptions most sublime and awful. St. Paul says to the Thessalonians in the fourth chapter of his first epistle, For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. David says, in the fiftieth psalm; Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. St. John says, in the twentieth chapter of his

revelation, And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. St. Peter says, in the third chapter of his second epistle, But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. These passages speak for themselves. No comment upon them is necessary; and vain would be any attempt to add any thing to the solemnity which they contain.

I have now gone through with the several parts of my subject. You may think I have chosen a passage not the best adapted to the occasion. Most of those passages which immediately respect fasting, I have considered in former years, and if I would avoid the beaten path, I must take a new guide. We may make such an improvement of the subject as will make it appear suitable.

Have we not reason to keep a day of fasting when we consider, that this gospel of the kingdom, which has been so long in the world, has not even to the present time, which is the nineteenth century of the christian era, been preached except to a small portion of the world? Where there is no vision the people perish. What vast multitudes then must have perished, who might have been saved by the gospel! Satan has been suffered to establish his strong holds, and to remain the undisturbed monarch of his own dark and dismal kingdom, carrying on that work which is the only one congenial with his nature, the work of destruction. Are we not called upon to fast from the consideration, that in these last days, when the angel is almost ready to lift up his hand to heaven and swear, that time shall be no longer, there is so little of a disposition among those who have all their lives been possessed of this gospel, to send it to those who never saw it, and who must be miserable without it! Nothing but selfishness, or sin, which is the same thing, can account for this strange indifference to an affair of so much importance. Want of means cannot be pleaded as an excuse, nor can the want of success which has attended the endeavors already made to bring the ignorant to the knowl-

edge of God. A light tax on the luxuries and superfluities of life, if it should become universal, would raise a pile high as the top of Atlas; and if the labors of the husbandman meet with any encouragement, surely the labors of the missionary are, at least, equal. The savages of our wilderness were certainly among the most unpromising objects for compassion to go to work upon, but among no class of people perhaps, has the work performed been better received.

Have we not reason to fast, when we reflect how poor an improvement is made of this gospel by those who have it, and who never saw the day when they were not in the possession of it?

The Sabbath comes one day in seven, and yet what multitudes who might be in the house of God, choose rather to be in their own houses, or in their fields, or on the road, performing journeys of pleasure, or of business. This they think they have a right to do, and give no reason for it, though it is in direct defiance of God's own positive, and solemn injunctions. What multitudes assemble in the places where public worship is performed, having no motive but to transact some secular concern, or to see or be seen, or to contrive or talk of some frivolous amusements.

How small is the proportion, in every place, of those who make a public profession of religion! In a population of twelve hundred, if the church consists of two hundred, it is thought to be a large church, and yet it contains only one sixth of the whole number. Five sixths therefore, to say the least, give this negative manifestation, that they have not embraced the gospel.

When we look into the church too, we are presented with a melancholy sight, for as in the days of the apostles when Christ was upon earth, there was one traitor in the number of twelve, we have reason to fear, that the proportion is far greater in ordinary times, and as things commonly are. What do ye more than others, is a close question to professors. If members of the church are not chargeable with falsehood, with fraud, with profanity, with intemperance, or other scandalous vices, their manner of life may be so irreligious that this passage of scripture may be very applicable to their case. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that

know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.

My brethren and friends, to whomsoever we apply this subject, if we do not apply it to ourselves, it will do us no good. If we see how it is with others, will this answer our purpose, unless we see how it is with ourselves? When we consider the condition of this church, and of this society, can we feel satisfied? Does it appear that we are living in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace, or is there any thing upon which we can found a hope that times of greater prosperity are approaching? Have we not occasion to say with miserable Saul, God is departed from me, and answereth me no more neither by prophets nor by dreams.

SERMON XI.

FAST SERMON.

ZECHARIAH xii, 10—14.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

THIS is a prophecy which has had a partial fulfilment, at different periods already, but it undoubtedly has respect to a future period, for its final, and full, accomplishment.

God's ancient people, now scattered in every direction, and in circumstances exactly such as Moses predicted, are to be brought back to the land of their fathers, and to be received again into favor; so that those natural branches,

which have for many ages been broken off, will be seen to flourish more than ever when the time shall come for them to be engrafted upon the olive tree, their original stock.

Though the time in which we are living is the nineteenth century since the total rejection, and dispersion, of the people, and though we see not yet any thing considerable effected in relation to their recovery, their recovery is certain for the word of truth stands pledged for its accomplishment.

The house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, spoken of in our text, include the whole community, reckoning all ages, and orders; and the language plainly marks the distinction between rulers and subjects. In the eighty-ninth psalm God says, Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David; His seed shall endure forever; and his throne as the sun before me.

David is a name which here designates him personally, and also refers to Christ, of whom he was a type; and though the prophecy is incapable of a complete and literal, accomplishment, in any one but Christ, it was accomplished, in a great degree, in that long succession of kings which sprang from the house of David.

The house of David, as it was for so long time a house of kings, may well represent all the kings of that people, throughout every age. As we know not what will be the form of government in that day when the things prophesied in the text will be realized, so it is impossible for us to determine, that there will not then be one actually descended from David, sitting on a throne, and reigning as a king, where David was once king himself. If the distinction of tribes, and families, is lost, it is lost only to the tribes, and families, and the world at large; for it must be well known to God to what tribe, and to what family each individual belongs; and he can make such a selection as he shall see fit.

Jerusalem, called also Jebus, and Salem, was, in the days of Joshua, one of the most powerful kingdoms of Canaan; and when subdued by David it became his capital; and continued to be the capital city of the whole country, while the tribes were united; and after a separation took place, it was still the capital city of the kings of Judah. Because

of its importance, and because that a reformation in populous places is seldom seen when there is not a general reformation, what is said of Jerusalem, is to be understood as equally applicable to the country which stands connected with it.

Our common method is to endeavor to find out the meaning of what we read, for it is very evident, that no benefit can result from our reading, unless we understand what was intended by the writer. When I say this is our common method, I refer, not to the Bible, but to other books; for with respect to the Bible, the meaning seems not to be sought after, by the generality of those who read it.

To confine ourselves to this single passage, does it appear that the Jews of old times did, as a nation, inquire for the meaning of it; or, that the majority of those who read it now, whether Jews or Gentiles, stop to consider what such words, standing in such a connexion must impart.

As we have nothing else to do at present, let us take up this passage, and examine it, as well as we can, in its several parts.

The first thing to be noticed is, that a spirit of grace, and of supplications, is to be poured upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Grace and supplications go together; and the two terms may be considered as having reference to various things. When these things shall take place, the condition of that people will be essentially, and wonderfully altered. Let us take notice in what ways a spirit of grace must discover itself; and in what ways a spirit of supplications must be manifested.

All men who ever think upon the subject, endeavor to find something upon which to rest a hope, that they shall finally be accepted of God; and though there are many devices in a man's heart, they all come to the same point, and may all be denominated self righteousnesses. Should we confine ourselves to the history of Israel, that evidence which is universally connected with the case of the natural man, would be abundantly found in the case of that people. Their fasting exhibited pride, instead of humiliation; and they submitted to various mortifications; unnecessary; uncommanded, and unprofitable; for being ignorant of God's

which have for many ages been broken off, will be seen to flourish more than ever when the time shall come for them to be engrafted upon the olive tree, their original stock.

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righteousness, and traced to the merit of their works, whatever good they had, and depended upon the merit of their works for whatever good they expected.

When the time shall come for a spirit of grace to be poured upon them, there will be a great revolution in their moral, and religious, sentiments; and seeing their works of righteousness in the light of truth, they will hasten their escape from such a sandy foundation: and rejoice to build upon the foundation that God himself has laid, and described in his Word. Their language will be very different when they shall obtain a more correct understanding of human nature; and those expressions which record their past and present feelings, will become quite obsolete when they shall no more be disposed to say God I thank thee, that I am not as other men; or we be Abraham's seed; or Are we blind also?

Whoever considers how broad a commandment the law of God is, must see that it extends to every thing external, and internal, to the actions; to the words; and to the thoughts; to the desires, and to the affections, and of course, that it must be a fiery law to every transgressor; holding forth no encouragement; but threatening absolute and universal ruin.

The doctrine of grace is food for the souls of humble and contrite sinners, while those who merely speculate upon religion, without being allured by the promises, or alarmed by the terrors of the Lord; spurn at a free salvation; and arrogantly, and ignorantly, prefer a claim to what they will not receive as a gift.

A spirit of grace, not only disposes those who are possessed of it, to welcome the doctrine of grace, and to reject every doctrine that is inconsistent with it; but it likewise brings up to view the goodness of God, in the several displays of it; for whatever he bestows is grace to the recipient since he is under no obligation to bestow any thing; and since every thing granted, where there is no obligation is fairly included in the meaning of the term grace. All people who can see what God has done for them, can see that he has done much and the people of Israel, when they shall be led to look into their own circumstances, and to trace the history of their ancestors, will cease to complain, that

the way of the Lord is not equal, and will be sensible, that mercies have abounded, notwithstanding judgments have, at times, been numerous and heavy.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from whom the nation descended, experienced, in their persons, and families, special providential care and protection; and so did their posterity, through a long succession of generations.

With judgments mercies were mingled in Egypt, and when the people left that country, a train of miracles followed them through the wilderness, during their long march of forty years; and though their circumstances changed when their establishment was effected, miracles still continued to attend them.

Miracles aside, that people in that day, compared with the rest of the world, appeared like a well cultivated field or garden, compared with a forest which exhibits nothing but the rudeness of nature, so extraordinary was their share of blessings, temporal, and spiritual: and even their captivities afforded them an opportunity, which was improved by so many as had a disposition to derive benefit to themselves, by imparting the knowledge of divine things to the ignorant and idolatrous inhabitants of other lands. The paths of the Lord dropped marrow and fatness upon them in things of a common kind; but their most prominent distinction is to be seen in their religious condition. God raised up prophets to teach them, supplied them with a written revelation, builded his temple in the midst of them; and established the ordinances of his worship.

About eighteen centuries have passed away since they were rejected, and dispersed; but they carry the mark of their original with them, wherever they go; and being kept distinct from other people, this circumstance will be regarded as a favor, when they shall come to regard it all. All past favors will, doubtless, be taken into consideration in that day of consideration to which our text refers us, and those who will take notice of favors bestowed upon others; will be still more mindful of favors bestowed upon themselves.

A spirit of grace must also be a spirit of submission. Those who think that what they have is much less than

what they ought to have, will never be satisfied; but every one who realizes, that it is of the Lord's mercies that he is not consumed, will be inclined to say, The will of the Lord be done.

Moses, with all his meekness, and patience, was severely tried with the stiff-necked disposition of his countrymen; and we see this disposition, more or less, in every period of their history. But when they shall see what have been their provocations, and what has been the forbearance of God, they will be, in some measure, sensible how much they are indebted, and be humble, and thankful, instead of being proud and rebellious.

To these things respecting a spirit of grace it may be added, that it will be a powerful stimulus to the performance of every duty. That we may do what we will with our own is readily admitted. There is propriety in acting upon this principle if we look no farther than to our connexion one with another; but the case is very different when our connexion with God is taken into the account, for we are his; and all that we have belongs to him, so that his right to every thing is absolute, and clear, and there is nothing, concerning which we can say, that this is our own. We are stewards and it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. When one is entrusted with the goods of another, he becomes accountable; and when he thinks of his trust, he will think of his accountability, and endeavor to be in readiness to give up his account, when he shall be required.

To the people of Israel, as well as to other people, it is very interesting to consider, that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and, that every one, who at the final reckoning, shall be found an unprofitable servant, will be cast into outer darkness. Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. This accounts for all that disregard to the law of God, which is to be seen in our world. We cannot be slothful in business, when we have a firm belief in a day of judgment.

With a spirit of grace a spirit of supplications stands connected; and we are now to consider how it will influence

those who receive it. Those who supplicate in earnest, supplicate for all good, to themselves, and to their fellow men, leaving it to God to determine, time, manner, and measure, and every thing relating to the subject.

As a state of condemnation is a most uncomfortable state, pardon will be most earnestly sought after, by all who are sensible of the need and importance of it.

If we have been pardoned or if we wish to be pardoned, we must equally wish to be sanctified; for if we continue under the dominion of sin, a pardon can avail us but little; since it regards only actual trespasses, without removing the disposition to trespass again. To know God, and ourselves, our duty, and our interest; and to have every thing pertaining to life, and godliness, plainly set before us, is essential to our welfare, present, future, and everlasting; and as for this knowledge we are altogether dependant upon God, each one who is sensible of his dependance, will be inclined to address him, and say, That which I know not teach thou me!

Our circumstances in the world, so far as our comfort is concerned, or our usefulness, may be considered as important; and it is therefore, permitted to us, to make them an article in our supplications.

A peaceful death, and a glorious immortality, being blessings of so much value, that other blessings are valuable only as they stand connected with these; for these we may ask, without any apprehension, that we can ask too frequently, or too importunately.

What would be good for us, would, circumstances being similar, be good for others, and as we are required to love our neighbor as ourselves, our duty in this respect is plainly marked out in relation to others.

This spirit of supplication, which is to be poured upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will be very different from that spirit by which pharisees, and all formalists of old times, were actuated, who chose the most frequented places for their devotions, that they might have a greater number of witnesses. That was rather a spirit of ostentation, than of supplications.

What we are next to consider is, the mourning which will take place with the cause which is to excite it. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first born.

There can be no doubt, that what is described in this language is, the crucifixion of Christ; together with the feelings which will be excited in the people descended from those who nailed him to the cross, and pierced his side with a spear, when they shall come to look back upon this horrid deed of their fathers, and consider it as their own; unbelief being the same in all, and always producing the same effects in like circumstances, and with like incentives.

But by what grammatical rules; or by what rules of interpretation, will those persons proceed to examine this passage, who can see in Christ nothing but a man and who acknowledge no difference between him and the malefactors who were crucified with him, except, that he might have exceeded them in the regularity of his life. Whoever is the speaker, he speaks, first, of himself, and then of another; for he says me, and him, using both the first person and the third. Such language, applied to a common case, would be a great incongruity; for where the object is simply one, it ought not to be described as having a two fold existence.

The speaker is, evidently, God, and yet he says, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. This is equivalent to what is said in the New Testament, where God is represented as purchasing the church with his own blood. Though no one supposes that a spirit could shed blood, since blood is connected with flesh, and though no one supposes, that God could die, yet if God was united with the man Christ Jesus, he might speak of himself as pierced, when the man Christ Jesus was pierced. That there was an actual union of two natures in one person, must be acknowledged by all who acknowledge the scriptures to be true; for nothing is plainer than, that Jesus Christ possessed every attribute of God, both natural, and moral.

We read of God; and of the son of God; and if there be many who have the same gross conceptions upon this sub-

ject that Nicodemus had about being born again, the difficulty is with them, for the scriptures are explicit. The distinction of person in the Godhead, could not be marked with more accuracy than it is in the text, where God speaks of himself in the first person, and of his only begotten Son in the third, exhibiting the humanity of Christ, as suffering; and his divinity as rendering his sufferings, meritorious.

Had not Christ assumed a mortal body, he could not have died; and had not his body been a temple for God himself to dwell in, his death would have been a common event, and no more important effects would have resulted from it than from the dissolution of any earthly tabernacle.

The first of these assertions no one will undertake to call in question; and the last is equally undeniable with the first. To be consistent then, if we admit the doctrine of the atonement, we must admit likewise, the deity of Christ; for if we deny one, we virtually deny the other.

If any talk of an atonement, who maintain, that human nature is not sunk in deep depravity, they appear to me to understand, neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm; for if an atonement be any thing, it is a remedy suited to none but an extreme case, which no one understands, so as to manage it, but he who understands all things; and is capable of accomplishing all things.

What the sorrow is which the parent experiences who has lost his only son, especially when that is his first born, and only child; such, and much greater, will be the sorrow of the persons whose case is referred to in the text.

Their mourning, among other things, will be excited by the contemplation of those sufferings which the Savior, in his own person, endured. He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. A hostile world arranged itself against him as soon as he was born. We read of those who sought the young child's life; and that he was carried by his parents into Egypt, that he might be safe from the rage of Herod.

While the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; the Son of man testified that he had not where to lay his head.

He came to his own, and his own received him not. The Jewish nation, eminently his own people, because of peculiar favors granted to them; and his brethren among that people, believed not on him, but rejected him, and formed plots to effect his destruction. In the little company of his disciples one was a traitor, and sold himself for thirty pieces of silver; another denied him, and with oaths, and curses, declared that he had no knowledge of him; and all finally forsook him and fled.

He experienced many temptations, at different times from the devil; his soul was, while he was in the garden of Gethsemane, exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; he was in an agony; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; he was buffeted, and spit upon; and, in every way, insulted; he was nailed to the cross; and his death was attended with such tortures, that no parallel case can be found, nor can any tongue describe it. Eyes that never wept before, would weep; and the heart that never felt before, one throb of sympathy, would break, were half these woes detailed in some romance. Does it then surpass belief, that the tenderest feelings will be awakened, and experienced, when the inquiry shall be made in earnest Are these things so?

Here we may add this consideration, that those who mourn for the sufferings of Christ, mourn also for their own criminality; and consider unbelief as the spear with which they themselves, have pierced his side. To the world at large, it appears to be no more sin to disbelieve the gospel, than to disbelieve any idle legend; but the case is far different, in the view of every convinced sinner: for every such person is persuaded, that he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar. Is there no sin in making God a liar? Can there be any sin so great? May not all sin be traced to this, as its principle, and root? Whatever then, may have been the conduct; whether more, or less, exceptionable, if unbelief has been the character; when we are brought to see things in their proper light, we shall see in ourselves abundant occasion for lamentation, mourning and woe.

Finally let it be observed, that this kind of sorrow has this circumstance connected with it, that every one who is a

subject of it, sees and laments, that he has brought damage upon himself, and others, by his sin. The evils of life would be reduced within a small compass, if we would stay ourselves upon the God of salvation; confide in his veracity; faithfulness; and compassion; and regulate our conduct by the rules of his Word; and were we to pursue this course, we should find a double object obtained; for as evils diminished, in the same ratio, good things would be multiplied. Prosperity and adversity, though according to our estimate, they depend upon outward circumstances, have, in fact, very little to do with any thing but the state of the mind; and if it be admitted, that others can injure us, it is still true, that no one can injure us so much as ourselves.

In all our connexions likewise, the good, or the evil, that we shall do, will be according to our principles, and practices; and in exact proportion to our influence, as members of the community. One sinner destroyeth much good. You may class me as you will, if sinner be a term appropriate to my character, it will be true of me, as it was of St. Paul before his conversion, that I shall be injurious. It may be said of sin as of a contagious disease, that we know not how far it will spread; and therefore, we can make no calculation concerning the extent of the injury which a single act of sin may produce.

Such is the nature of that sorrow which we have under consideration; and such are the causes from which it originates. The Jews, when they shall become a penitent people, will be acquainted with the subject; and all people, of every name, and country, will be possessed of the same feelings when repentance shall give them the same character.

Having given a general representation of that time of wonderful humiliation to which we are referred, the text proceeds to speak of it more particularly. First it is compared to a memorable mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon of which we have an account in the thirty fifth chapter of the second book of Chronicles. This mourning was for the death of Josiah, a king of Judah, very distinguished for his piety and for the reformation which he effected or attempted among his people. He was but eight years old when he began to reign, and he ended his reign

and his life before he was forty years of age. In his sixteenth year it is recorded that he began to seek after the God of David his father, and in his twentieth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the groves and the carved images and the molten images and to do away all the vestiges of the idolatry of his father Amon, and of preceding kings who had resembled him. The work which he began so well he did not relinquish but continued a faithful and zealous servant of God as long as he lived. This being the case it may be thought strange that he was cut off at so early a period. God is under no obligation to assign to us the reasons of his conduct. The death of Josiah might be a blessing to him personally, and yet a judgment on the nation, and a merited one too. Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, with a view of attacking Carchemish, which belonged to the Assyrian empire, on the east of the Euphrates, marched an army into the heart of Josiah's kingdom, and though he admonished him not to resist him, and declared that God was with him, Josiah had no reason to believe his declaration, and he had much reason to suspect him of an evil intention, and to defend himself, if not to defend an ally likewise, he undertook, perhaps too precipitately, and without consulting God as to the expediency of it, the war in which he lost his life. We should judge from the scriptural record that no death was ever more sensibly felt nor attended with more public and general manifestation of unfeigned sorrow. All Judah and Jerusalem, says the sacred writer, mourned for Josiah, And all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day and made them an ordinance in Israel, and behold they are written in the lamentations. Well might the people put on the mantle of mourning, for evils more than could have been anticipated were realized, and the kingdom was utterly destroyed in the short space of about twenty years. Jehoahaz was placed upon the throne, as the immediate successor of his father Joshua, but his reign was only for three months, and the rest of his days he spent as a prisoner in close confinement in Egypt. Eliakim called also Jehoiakim was permitted next to take the reins of government as a tributary, and for eleven years he

had an opportunity in this capacity to practice wickedness. Concerning him, the Lord said by Jeremiah, They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother or ah my sister, they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord or ah his glory. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin of like character. His reign however was only for three months and ten days. The rest of his life he spent in Babylon, though in the thirty seventh year of his captivity he was taken out of prison, and treated with kindness. The last king was Mattaniah called Zedekiah and he was the third of Josiah's sons who sat upon the throne. He like the rest did evil in the sight of the Lord and if he excelled them at all it was in doing evil. For eleven years he had the title of king and then by order of the king of Babylon, his sons were slain before his eyes, his eyes were put out, and he was bound with fetters of brass and carried to Babylon. For the farther history of him we must depend upon our imagination, for nothing more is recorded. He was but thirty two years of age when his eyes were put out and his fetters of brass put on, and if he lived as long as some men do, he had, unless he repented, a long period of solitude and wretchedness on this side of the grave. If this should be thought a digression, I hope it will be pardoned and allowed to have some connexion with the mourning in the valley of Megiddon to which there is an allusion in the text. The mourning predicted, which is to resemble the mourning for Josiah, will probably be a public one, though it is described farther as families are respected, and though families are described as separating to indulge their sorrow in a more private manner. The names here mentioned as they represent offices, may most profitably be considered distinctly and in their order. The family of the house of David, represents the family of kings or of rulers, whatever may be their titles. Rulers highly as they may be exalted above their fellow men, are still but men, and of course as they are liable to do wrong, and have many temptations peculiar to themselves, so in common with others, they have occasion for mourning on account of their own misconduct.

Those who are the most faithful, and in every sense the best qualified are the most sensible of defects in the measures of their administration and in their whole manner of life. The rulers, here called the family of David, may not be more perfect than David was himself or than some other kings, who in times past governed the same people, and whose piety is unquestionable. In David's case, the affair of Uriah, and the numbering of the people, so highly disapproved of by God, and so severely punished, will never be forgotten, and the wickedness manifested in these transactions, will never find any one to justify it. Jehoshaphat did wrong in joining affinity with Ahab. Hezekiah did wrong in ostentatiously acquainting the ambassadors from Babylon with the treasures of his kingdom, and when should we get through with the rehearsal were we to take Solomon and all who might be associated with him, and tell of every thing which they did which they ought not to have done. Were what is called profane history, as faithful a record as the sacred history is, we should see much more than we see at present of the faults and iniquities of those who in different ages have ruled in different countries and the best rulers which can be expected even in the best days of the world, will probably have much imperfection attending them and therefore much to excite their sorrow. As Nathan was an eminent prophet, the family of the house of Nathan stands for those who sustain the prophetic character. We are not to gather from what is here said, I conceive, that prophets at a future day are to be raised up to officiate in the same capacity with prophets of old time, for the volume of revelation is already complete and nothing will ever be added to it. But as prophets were a sacred order of men, uncommonly favored, so those who in sacred things shall hold the highest place may be denoted by the family of the house of Nathan. Whether such persons will have mourning of their own for sins of their own can hardly be made a question. Certain it is that prophets of the Lord who lived and died long ago committed sins, the account of which may be seen on the pages where their names are written. To mention but two instances, Elijah afraid of Jezebel when he ought to have trusted the Lord, fled from his work first

to the juniper tree, and then to the cave, and Jonah, instead of going to Ninevah to execute his commission, embarked with a heathen crew, to go to Tarshish, insensible that he could not escape from the omnipresence of God, nor shield himself from his omnipotence.

By the family of the house of Levi we are to understand, generally, the ministers of religion; for this was the designation and work of the tribe of Levi. Aaron, belonging to this tribe, and his male descendants, were priests, and the other male members of the tribe, were Levites, and inferior agents. As prophets may not be looked for again, so may not priests and Levites, if we understand by the terms exactly what was formerly understood, for that typical dispensation ended when Christ the antetype appeared. But religion will be the good of the world in all ages and in all circumstances, and when most enjoyed, the people, instead of thinking themselves so wise that it will be for their advantage to dispense with instruction, will prize more than ever the public servants of the Lord, whose business it is to act as pastors and teachers. Concerning the priests and Levites enough is to be found in their history to show us that they were men of like passions with others, and that their sanctification was but partially effected. Aaron made the golden calf. Eli was lax in the government of his family and in the execution of his office, and Abiathar concurred with Adonijah in his conspiracy.

These instances are only specimens. Were the whole exhibited long would be the catalogue. If we suppose ministers of the gospel intended, as doubtless they are, in what is said of the family of the house of Levi, much as their people may be disposed to spread reports to their disadvantage, if they know any thing, they know more against themselves than any one can tell as truth or fabricate for mischief. Who was ever so mindful of his duty as to be sufficiently faithful in the performance of it, feeling the whole force and solemnity of the words addressed to Timothy, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering

and doctrine. Whoever conducted in strict conformity with the ponderous meaning of our Savior's address, The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub how much more shall they call them of his household. Who labors so much as to be satisfied that he has done enough to rouse his own sluggish powers to action? Who teaches as much as he might or who watches as much as he ought? Who is sure that he is not a partaker in other men's sins? Better days will come and better ministers will preach, undoubtedly, than any who now undertake the performance of the task, but if God ever provides perfect ministers for this imperfect world, he will send angels and not men. The more holy any one is the more humble will he be of course, and the more humble the more penitent, and the more penitent the more self-condemned. If so, we may expect greater mourning than ever among the ministers of Christ, when that time shall come to which we are looking forward. But let no one say, if so, it will be an evil time, since it is written, Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

The family of Shimei is here mentioned, to close the enumeration of families and as prophet and Levite are distinctly spoken of, it is supposed that Shimei was some eminent scribe and that he represents the scribes as a class of men. Scribes were so called because they were employed to write, when few persons were capable of performing that service; and their office was an eminent one, which may be traced back as far as the days of Deborah. They were of the tribe of Levi, at least many of them, if not all. Ezra was a scribe, and in confessing the sins of the nation, he connected himself with the rest of the people. If Shimei was a scribe, since such men as were anciently called scribes will not be needed again, Shimei may perhaps represent the deacons in the christian church. Deacons when first appointed were ordained, as appears from the sixth chapter of Acts, and though this consecration is now generally if not wholly omitted, what Paul wrote to Timothy is still legible, and intelligible. Likewise must the deacons be grave,

not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let those also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Does any one sustaining this office find his own likeness, when he looks at this picture, and will the time ever come when there will not be a sufficient dissimilarity to produce feelings of contrition.

To sum up the whole, all the families that remain are spoken of, which must be, I suppose, all the people not before particularly designated, that is, the people at large of every name and rank. If those who hold offices are more responsible than others; and if their sins are greater because of the advantages of their stations, all in private life likewise are sinners, and are called to repentance and humiliation. With respect to the families particularly named, and with respect to the people at large, it is predicted that they shall mourn, every family apart and their wives apart, that is, husbands and wives shall withdraw each from the other, and parents and children, so that every individual shall be alone. Thus our Lord without abrogating the general injunctions in regard to prayer enjoined it upon his disciples to pray in secret. Should the head of a family in the most devotional manner attend to the worship of God in his family, presenting in faith his confession, his thanksgiving, and his supplication; knowing only his own case with accuracy, he might come very short of fully exhibiting every case, as those associated with him in the household might be concerned. Of course all who understood their circumstances would want to state them for themselves. Each one might have sins and difficulties not known to the rest, and not proper to be made known to any one but God.

You now have the subject before you with all that my circumscribed abilities, scanty portion of time, and state of health, would allow me to offer upon it. If this is the destiny of the Jewish nation, we may well say with St. Paul, God hath not cast off his people which he foreknew. The time of the full accomplishment of this prophecy cannot

be far distant. It is an honor which God has conferred upon this country, that he has taken from it the first missionaries to address the inhabitants of Jerusalem upon the most interesting of all subjects, that of their everlasting salvation. If they are alive and have not changed their purposes, they are probably before this time upon the spot and can see where our Savior taught the people, and where he was crucified with the malefactors. If their labors should be attended with the same success with those of other missionaries, Jerusalem may in a short time break forth in songs. Shall we not all pray and endeavor that they may prosper? Our own country is an object which we cannot contemplate without feeling much interest in every thing that relates to it. Though the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage, the state of things would be far better with us if a spirit of grace and of supplications were so extensively poured upon us, that rulers and subjects, ministers and people, all ranks and ages, all families and individuals, should be disposed to turn unto the Lord with that contrition which would make them sensible that they had revolted from him. We may be sure of pious rulers when we are a pious people, for we have such rulers as we ourselves appoint. Some pretend to understand by pious rulers, those that are weak in intellect and irresolute. Though weak and irresolute men may be pious, it is granted that they are not the right men to manage a nations' concerns. By pious men I mean those who fear God and regard man; and other things being equal, I should vastly prefer them, for I am not ashamed to own that in my judgment Jehoshaphat was a better king than Ahab; Hezekiah than Ahaz, and Josiah than either of the sons who succeeded him. Much prosperity might be expected this year, and for years, not to say for ages, to come, if this day should be observed as a day of humiliation and the people should humble themselves for their sins and implore the pardoning mercy of God.

SERMON XII.

FAST SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY xxxii, 6.

*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise?
Is not he thy father, that hath bought thee? hath he not
made thee, and established thee?*

DEUTERONOMY, the name under which this book goes, signifies a repetition of the law, because it contains several laws which had been given before. But, in addition to laws, we find much interesting matter in relation to God's dealings with his people, and many predictions, of good, and evil; the fulfilling of which is obvious to every one who is at all acquainted with the history of the world. We may be profited by what took place with regard to this people, and in proportion to our wisdom, will be the attention which we shall give to their affairs.

What God did for Israel, in the formation of that community; and in the various blessings which he bestowed upon it, will upon the present occasion, come first in order to be considered.

The calling of Abraham was the first step in this business. Idolatry had spread itself over the world; and God appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, where he dwelt with Terah his father; and said to him, Get thee out of thy country; and from thy kindred; and from thy father's house; unto a land that I will shew thee. Terah was an idolater; and, doubtless, idolatry was the religion of his family. When Abram was ordered away however, Terah went with him, and all his household; but stopping, for some reason, at Ha-

ran, some hundred miles short of Canaan the place of their destination, they spent a few years there; and there Terah died.

The subsequent particulars relating to Abram are all very interesting, among which may be reckoned the change of his name; the covenant made with him; the birth of his son Isaac; and the trial of his faith, when he was commanded to offer him up for a burnt offering. The history of Isaac shows the purpose of God respecting the nation which he was about to bring into existence; but the time will not be taken up now, in attending to this history.

Jacob, the son of Isaac, was called also Israel; and he was the immediate founder of the Israelitish nation. In a time of famine he sent his sons to Egypt for corn; and Joseph, that son whom he expected never more to see, by the overruling providence of God, being exalted to the highest dignity in the court of Pharaoh, Jacob and his sons obtained, not only a temporary supply for their wants, but an advantageous settlement in the land of Egypt where they spent their lives.

In this land the descendants of these strangers lived, quietly, and prosperously, until a king arose who knew not Joseph; who was either ignorant of the conspicuous and useful part which he had acted; or regardless of the benefits which had accrued to the kingdom through his instrumentality.

As the Israelites were a people by themselves, and multiplied with great rapidity, policy seemed to require the adoption of some measure tending to prevent their too great multiplication; and a haughty oppressor was willing to carry such a measure into effect. But as that cannot be frustrated which God has undertaken to accomplish, so Pharaoh failed, altogether, in what he expected; and the evil which he meditated for others, he brought directly and tremendously, upon his own kingdom. The burdens imposed upon this subjugated people, became intolerable; for while they were required to perform their daily task in making brick, they were denied what was necessary as the means.

The time of greatest necessity is especially the time for God to manifest himself to his people, and grant them as-

sistance; and this should ever be kept in remembrance. God is invisible, and brings about his purposes by employing instruments, and using means; and in all instances they are such as are most glorious to himself, and such as he makes effectual to the end which he has in view.

An order had been given which it was dangerous to disregard, that all the male children of the Israelites should be put to death, as soon as they were born. But this order was not strictly observed; and among the children that were spared, Moses was one. His important life was preserved very providentially.

Having been concealed by his mother, until she could conceal him no longer, he was put into an ark of bulrushes, which was daubed with slime, and pitch, to keep the water out, and laid among the flags, by the side of the river. At a distance stood Miriam the sister of this exposed infant to see what would become of him. Pharaoh's daughter, directed to the spot, found the ark, and was moved with compassion towards the weeping infant that was shut up in it; though she had no doubt that an Israelitish woman was its mother, and, that for that reason it was under the sentence of death.

Miriam was present; and we may believe with great satisfaction, to witness the tender feelings of the princess; and without divulging what might innocently be kept secret, she offered her service to procure an Israelitish woman to nurse the child for her, who had found it in this helpless, and perilous situation. The real mother was called; and with what increased delight must she have received again to her bosom, that little object of tender solicitude which she had but just committed to the protection of that God to whom all things are possible! The care which she took to provide a vessel which might float with safety upon the waters, is evidence that her faith anticipated some providential interference: but as in cases in general, so in this particular, what was brought to pass in all probability, far exceeded what was expected.

As the adopted child of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was instructed in whatever was known in Egypt at that time; and as the real child of Amram and Jochebed, under whose

care he was placed in infancy, we have reason to think he had all the advantages for understanding the fundamental principles of the true religion which believing parents could administer.

To a person differently disposed, the prospect which Moses had in Egypt would have been very flattering; for great things of a temporal kind, were within his reach; perhaps, no less than the honors, and emoluments, of the crown. But, whatever gratitude he felt, and manifested, towards his benefactress, who had saved his life, by drawing him out of the water, and who had conferred upon him every benefit which came within the compass of her power; actuated by faith in the promises of God, he refused to be considered as her son, and heir; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

So impressed was he with the task assigned him, as the deliverer of Israel, that he entered upon it forty years before the circumstances favored its accomplishment. Of course, he was obliged to flee from Egypt to the land of Midian, where he spent this long period in the retirement of a shepherd's life; a life well adapted to make him meek and patient; and thus to qualify him for that more laborious, though more dignified, employment, in which he was to engage, as the leader, and commander, of his own people. His first effort, which was unsuccessful, will in some measure, account for, though it will, by no means, excuse the reluctance which he discovered when God commanded him to go to Pharaoh, with a message concerning Israel's emancipation.

The monarch to whom Moses was sent, though called Pharaoh, because that was the common name of the kings of Egypt, was not the same man under whose reign he was born and by whose daughter he was educated. He died while Moses was in Midian, as we have an account in the second chapter of Exodus. He who was then upon the throne however, pursued the same policy with the Israelites, and was, certainly, no less rigorous, and oppressive, in his treatment of them.

Yet, so manifest was the divine hand in the deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of Pharaoh, that every one,

possessed of the same faith, will adopt the same language which Jethro used in speaking of the matter. Now I know, that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

The magicians of Egypt, among whom Jannes, and Jambres, appeared conspicuous for their rank, long withstood Moses, and as long contributed to the hardness of Pharaoh's heart; but at length they were forced to acknowledge the finger of God, and to desist from their own attempts at imposition.

The judgments of heaven fell in such quick succession upon Egypt, and to such an alarming degree, that both monarch, and people, were not only willing, that the Israelites should depart, but very urgent; and put much treasure into their hands, which, though it is said to have been lent, they could not have expected ever to receive again.

Thus the Israelites departed without any one to forbid them. But their departure immediately became a matter of general regret; and a formidable army was set in motion to overtake them, and bring them back. The success of this measure was calculated upon as a matter of certainty; especially when it was found, that the Israelites were encamped in the straits of Pihahiroth, where they were completely surrounded; the Red sea before them; mountains on each side; and the pursuing army in the rear.

Unbelief could devise no way of escape; and the people, unmindful of the mighty acts of the Lord which they had before witnessed, assailed their leader with bitter reproaches. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians: For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than, that we should die in the wilderness.

Instead of rendering railing for railing, Moses replied in the language of composure, and confidence; for he had, in this very critical case, according to his duty, spent his time in crying unto the Lord; and he had obtained such an answer as removed all his doubts, and fears; and such an

one as explained to him what would be the grand result of the whole affair. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more forever.

He whom the winds obey, caused a strong east wind to blow, and thus made a safe path through the deep waters of the Red sea, and his people, from two to three millions in number, marched forward on dry ground; the sea standing as a wall on each side of them. The infatuated Egyptians followed on, and were drowned for their temerity; the sea returning by the divine command, to fill up the path when the Israelites had no farther use for it. The emotions of mind experienced by Moses, and by as many in the camp of Israel as were of the same religious sentiments, and disposition, may be seen in that song which was composed, and sung, upon that very memorable occasion.

The distance from Egypt to Canaan, through the land of the Philistines, might have been travelled in a few days; but for wise reasons another course was marked out by God. The Psalmist says, And he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation. The Philistines being a warlike people, and the Israelites untutored in war, and unprepared for it, this circumstance was a weighty reason why the Israelites should not pass through the land of the Philistines; for they might have been discouraged, or destroyed. A still more important reason is assigned by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he adverts to some particulars relating to Israel's journey through the wilderness, and observes, Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The manner in which Israel was guided from Egypt to the promised land, was miraculous, and well, deserves our consideration. A cloud in form like a pillar, hung over the camp. In the day it was a moist shade, much needed, and very useful, to keep off the scorching rays of the sun, and in the night, it assumed the appearance of fire, and afforded them light. It usually kept rather forward of the people; but when they passed through the Red sea, it was

placed behind them, and before the Egyptian army; and thus it increased the darkness and gloom, of the night, to the Egyptians; while it shed sufficient light around the Israelites, to conduct them in their way. Forty years the Israelites followed this cloud as their guide, and by it they were directed when to march, and when to pitch their tents. When the cloud rested they rested; and when the cloud moved forward they proceeded with it. It is thought this cloud disappeared when Moses died.

As the Israelites had nothing to point out their course for them but the cloud, so they had nothing to keep them alive, but that miraculous provision with which God condescended daily to supply them. If the manna is a natural production, it was miraculously sent to the Israelites. It is said to be medicinal in its properties; and of course quite unfit for food; but in this case, it supplied the place of daily bread, and for forty years fed the multitude. It fell not upon the sabbath; but in a double quantity on the day preceding; and it continued fresh, and good, through the sabbath, though it bred worms, if an attempt was made to keep it, more than a day, at any other time. While it was needed it was sent; but it ceased to fall when the people arrived in Canaan, and could procure their bread from the corn of that land. A pot of this manna was laid up in the tabernacle, that it might be known to future generations, that God had spread a table, in the wilderness, and that it was with such food that he had sustained their fathers, through the long period of their wanderings from Egypt to the promised land. Meat seems to have been given in only two instances. Quails were brought, in great abundance, to the camp, in the wilderness of Sin; and at Kibroth-hattaavah.

For drink in the scorching sands through which they passed, the people had nothing to depend upon but the stream which flowed from the smitten rock. From the time the rock was smitten at Horeb, we read of no complaint on account of water for about thirty nine years; and then at Kadesh, where Miriam died, the unreasonable clamor of the people provoked Moses to the use of very improper expressions; and to smite a rock to which he was directed only to speak, that it might pour forth a stream of water. If in any

part of their way they could procure water without a miracle, perhaps they availed themselves of the opportunity. But, that it was, generally, if not always, supplied from the rock opened by the instrumentality of Moses for the purpose, may be fairly inferred from a passage in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them.

Alike remarkable with other things in the history of this people, is what Moses says to them. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee; neither did thy foot swell, these forty years: and what David says of them, And there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

God, who had guarded his people in Egypt, against the attempts of despotic power set maliciously to work, protected them against all the enemies who sought their destruction in their way to Canaan. Soon after they left Egypt, the Amalekites attacked them at Rephidim; but were routed and the manner in which Israel obtained the victory ought never to be forgotten. Moses sent Joshua with the army; and he himself, with the rod of God in his hand, and accompanied by Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. While Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed; but being unable to hold up his hands continually, Aaron and Hur, having provided a stone for him to sit upon, stayed them up; one placed on one side, and the other on the other; and thus the battle terminated in favor of Israel. To commemorate the important event, Moses erected an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi; the Lord my banner.

Israel had other enemies to encounter; the most formidable of whom, were Sihon, king of the Amorites; and Og, king of Bashan, whose country lay east of Jordan; and being conquered, it was given to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manassah. Of the Amorites we may get some idea from the second chapter of Amos, Yet destroyed I the Amorites before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars; and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath. Og had a bedstead of iron, nine cubits, or more than five yards in length; and four cubits or more

than two yards, in breadth. His kingdom contained, beside unwallled towns, sixty cities fenced with high walls.

The passage over the Jordan is among the miracles which God wrought for this people; and an astonishing miracle it has ever been considered, by all who have given credit to the record. It is mentioned as a circumstance of some importance, that at the time when the people passed over, the river was swollen to such a degree as to overflow its banks, as it did formerly, every year, at that season, and through the whole of the harvest, in consequence of the melting of the snows upon mount Lebanon.

The priests went forward, bearing the ark; and no sooner did their feet touch the water than an effectual check was given to the impetuous current; the river stood motionless at the command of that God whose dominion extends over all his works.

This was an event not to be forgotten; and monuments were provided to keep it in lasting remembrance. The priests took their station in the midst of the river; and there they stood until all the people had passed across. Twelve men were selected, one from each tribe, who according to their instructions, took as many stones from the midst of the river; carried them on shore; and put them together, where they lodged the first night. Twelve stones were set up in the midst of the river where the priests had stood. These stones were gathered, and placed, for the instruction of future generations. He who directed the gathering, and placing of them, could, undoubtedly, keep them from being scattered, and cause them to answer the purpose for which they were intended.

Jericho was near to Jordan; some make it eight miles west, and some less. The stop which the Israelites made at Gilgal, for the purpose of which we have an account, gave the people of Jericho an opportunity to hear of their miraculous passage over the Jordan; and they, and perhaps others with them, shut themselves up within the walls of their city. As they put not their trust in God for protection however, their walls proved altogether useless to them.

An invading army, differently commissioned, and depending on different means for success, would have employed battering rams, or other warlike engines, to force a passage into the enclosure. But, as God led on the Israelites himself, their affairs must all be so conducted, that the whole glory would be manifestly his due; and therefore, in this case, what looked the least likely to accomplish the end, was the measure prescribed. The armed men were placed first in the procession; the next to them the priests who blew with the trumpets; then followed those who bore the ark; and the body of the people brought up the rear. The whole, for six days, compassed the city, once a day, and then retired to their camp; but upon the seventh day they encompassed the city seven times; and at the seventh time when the priests blew with the trumpets, and the people shouted, all which was according to order, the wall fell down flat; the city was taken, and burned; and every creature destroyed, rational and animal, with the exception of Rahab, and those relatives who were with her.

Joshua pronounced a curse upon the man that should undertake to rebuild that devoted city, saying, he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born; and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. For about five centuries this curse deterred all men from undertaking a work from which such awful consequences were to be expected. But in the degenerate days of Ahab, Hiel, the Bethelite, set at defiance this denunciation of heaven, and built Jericho, at the expense, not only of much earthly treasure, but also of his first born, and of his youngest son; and probably, of all his intermediate children.

The conquest of the country was gradual; and the history of it is too well known to require recital. Thus God established his people in a land of great fertility, so that each one had occasion to say, The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; and I have a goodly heritage.

The laws, and regulations, formed for this community, make a conspicuous appearance in their condition, and evidently display their divine Author. For these we must go back to Sinai. Who can describe the awful scene which was exhibited, when God descended upon the quaking

mount, attended with thunderings; and lightnings; a thick cloud; and the voice of the loud sounding trumpet! The people stood trembling at the base of the mountain, as well they might, in view of such new, and terrible displays of divine majesty; and, even Moses, with all his faith, and with all the tokens of divine favor which he received, was exceedingly afraid.

The law, written with God's own finger upon tables of stone, is a perfect law; and comprises the whole duty of man towards God; and his duty in the various relations which are formed in society. This is a moral law; and though given by God to Moses with particular reference to the people of Israel, it is a law designed for general use; and civil laws are to be prized, and regarded, in proportion to their conformity to this standard of right.

In addition to the law given at Sinai, the Israelites had ceremonial laws, adapted to their peculiar circumstances; and the writings of the prophets, containing various things, the most important of which, relate directly to the Messiah.

The language of the people to Moses was, For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived! To the Romans the apostle Paul wrote, What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much, every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God. The privileges which the Israelites possessed, in consequence of the revelation with which they were favored, gave them an elevation above all the nations of the surrounding world; and their civil, and religious, concerns, were so interwoven, that God was both their lawgiver, and their king, until they grew weary of his service, and openly declared, that they would not have him to reign over them.

Having taken a view of some things which God did in regard to Israel, let us now consider some things in the conduct of that people with respect to him.

Their fears, lest they should be destroyed by Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, and lest they should perish with famine in the wilderness, and their murmurings, loud, and

repeated, as often as any difficulty presented itself, are recorded to their disgrace; and these things may serve to show us their want of confidence in the power, wisdom, and mercy of God, which they had so frequently witnessed.

On the fiftieth day after their departure from Egypt, it is computed, that the law was given; which circumstance gave rise to the feast of Pentecost, that word signifying fiftieth. We may therefore, see how soon the people discovered a propensity to idolatry; for it was while Moses was on the mount that they called upon Aaron to make them gods to go before them in compliance with which call he made the molten calf. We hardly know how to account for it, that they should be possessed of such gross conceptions, as to wish for such an object of worship; and that they should be so stupid, and infatuated, as to ascribe to that senseless lump of gold, their deliverance from Pharaoh's bondage, and their wonderful escape across the bed of the Red Sea. Was this that grateful return which God had reason to expect from them, for carrying them in safety through, where the Egyptian host perished to a man?

The sedition of Miriam, and Aaron, though the act of two individuals only, ought not to be passed over, because it is circumstantially noticed in the history; and was disapproved of by God, and punished. The cloud departed from the tabernacle; and Miriam became leprous, as white as snow; and was shut out seven days from the camp, in consequence of which the journey of the people was suspended. This affair makes no inconsiderable article in the evidence to prove human depravity; for Moses was the brother of Miriam, and Aaron, who brought their unreasonable complaint against him. Miriam seems to have forgotten how she watched him when an infant in the ark of bulrushes by the side of the Nile; what anxiety she felt for his preservation; and with what speed, in obedience to the order of the Egyptian princess, she provided one, who would, with the utmost care, and tenderness, and delight, nurse the little wretched outcast. She, and Aaron, too, appear to have forgotten all the circumstances which pointed Moses out as the deliverer and leader of Israel.

The rebellion of which Korah, Dathan and Abiram were the leaders, was an extensive one; and to human appearance very threatening; for it embraced many of the princes, and a great proportion of the congregation. The object was to effect an entire revolution; and to set aside Moses, and Aaron, from the places assigned them, under the pretence, that they assumed to themselves an authority not delegated to them in their commission; all the congregation being holy, and of course, each one as fit as they for their particular business.

However much alike by nature, Moses, and Aaron, might be to the rest of the congregation; for all men are alike in this, that by nature, they have no qualification, having no disposition, for the service of God, in public stations, or in private walks; they were manifestly set apart, and distinguished, by their appointment as much as by their countenances from all others in the camp. In this light it was considered, as may be seen in the manner in which it was punished. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and Abiram, and their families; and Korah perished, either with them, as is most probable, or with the two hundred and fifty who had offered incense, and whom the fire of the Lord utterly consumed. The sons of Korah were spared, perhaps, for their disapprobation of the conduct of their father; and their descendants, Heman, Samuel, and others, were sacred musicians in the days of David.

The next day after the destruction of these men, so little do awful instances of death frequently affect the living, there was a murmur of the whole congregation against Moses and Aaron; and they were charged with having killed the people of the Lord. For this a plague was sent, which swept away fourteen thousand and seven hundred; and it is likely, would have proved fatal to the whole, had it not been for the atonement made by Aaron, and accepted in behalf of the people.

Other sins committed in the wilderness, during the forty years that the Israelites were travelling from Egypt to Canaan, will be passed without notice. Let it be acknowledged with gratitude, and pleasure, that, They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders

that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord which he had done for Israel.

For their idolatry and other sins however they were afterwards reduced by various oppressors, and God raised up deliverers for them, under the name of Judges, for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until the days of Samuel the prophet. They then insisted upon having a king.

A people, in common circumstances, have a right to change their form of government, and place themselves under rulers of whatever name they please. The sin therefore, of which the Israelites were guilty, in choosing a king to rule over them, will not be understood without considering the difference between them and other nations. The words of the Lord to Samuel will explain the matter. Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. God, as their king, had appointed Judges to manage their concerns for them; and when they set Saul upon the throne, and gave themselves up to him as his subjects, they were guilty of an act of rebellion directly against God.

Among the sins with which this people stand charged, may be reckoned their treatment of the prophets, whom God sent to instruct them; to warn them of their danger; and to urge them to repentance, and a life of holiness. Those prophets, in order to be faithful to God in whose service they were employed, were obliged to be plain in their instructions; and pungent in their reproofs; and explicit in threatening sin with punishment: sparing no more the king upon the throne, than the most inconsiderable person among his subjects. Their labor of love, which ought to have been rewarded with gratitude, and richly rewarded, procured for them persecution, and death; so that Jerusalem became notorious for the murder of God's messengers, many of whom were stoned to death within its walls.

In the fulness of time, that greater prophet whom Moses had predicted, and to whom all the prophets had borne witness, made his appearance; not so much to teach the people, for before they had abundant means of knowl-

edge, as to make expiation for the sins of the world, by the offering of himself. The death of Christ was necessary to his chosen people for their salvation; but the conduct of those who put him to death was voluntary; and it was with wicked and murderous, hands, that they crucified, and slew him. To his own he came in person; and to that people who sustained a covenant relation to him, he confined the first offer of mercy which he directed his apostles to make.

The treatment which Christ received from the people was so much more criminal than any conduct of which they had before been guilty, that he might well say, If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.

The people experienced such consequences as they might have expected from that foolish course of conduct which they chose to pursue; and these consequences it may be of use for us in the next place to contemplate.

We will not go back to enumerate their sufferings in the wilderness. Some of them have been briefly mentioned, and the whole may be seen in the history. The Philistines, Syrians, Egyptians, and various other nations, were employed as instruments, to punish this people; and they punished themselves severely, by repeated wars upon each other, after two kingdoms were formed by the revolt of the ten tribes. About two hundred and fifty years after the kingdom of Israel was established, it was ruined, under Hoshea, by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria; many of the people killed, and others carried away captive. About a hundred and thirty years from that time, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the kingdom of Judah, and wholly destroyed it; and having slain the sons of Zedekiah the king, in his presence, he put out his eyes, and carried him to Babylon, where he shut him up in prison during the rest of his life.

In the fifty second year from the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews returned from their captivity, according to the edict of Cyrus king of Persia. They afterwards came under the yoke of the Romans, and were in subjection to them when Christ appeared in the world.

Those awful judgments the sword, and the famine, predicted, by Christ, overtook them, not many years after his crucifixion, and the remnant of the nation has been scattered from that day to this, in the different parts of the earth, known by their religious peculiarities, though exhibiting almost every shade of complexion.

The disadvantages which they labor under from oppression, in the different countries where they live, are nothing compared with that intellectual blindness, which their unbelief has brought upon them; and which, while it continues will be effectually in the way of their salvation. More than eighteen centuries has darkness, like the thick cloud which covered the top of Sinai at the giving of the law, hung over the great body of this rejected people. That awful imprecation of the murderers of Christ, His blood be on us, and on our children; has been realized in its full extent, through all intervening ages, to the present moment. The time however, will come, and we have reason to hope it is not far distant, when this deluded people will be delivered from the heavy evils which they have procured for themselves; and which have marked them out as objects of divine wrath. The passages of scripture which speak of their restoration are many and clear.

Our text is, certainly, not less applicable to our own condition as a nation, than to that of God's ancient people. We pretend not that any miracles have been wrought for us, but if the advantage belongs to Israel on account of this circumstance, it is, perhaps, more than balanced by other things, which we have, and which Israel never possessed.

All who know any thing of the settlement of this country by its first civilized inhabitants, have the proof before them, that the nation has grown great from very inconsiderable beginnings. It is very evident likewise, that as oppression prepared the way for the departure of Israel out of Egypt, so persecution induced the first emigrants to leave their native soil, and cross a wide, and dangerous ocean, that they might enjoy, in this remote part of the earth, though a wilderness at that time, such privileges as they could not have in any other place.

The compass, in ordinary cases, guides the mariner through the deep; and doubtless it was by the compass, that our forefathers were directed; but the finger of God as evidently pointed to this land, as the cloud which went before Israel, pointed to the land of promise.

If the Israelites were in danger of perishing in the sea, and in the river, and by famine, and from giants, and serpents; were not their perils likewise many, and great, who threw themselves, defenceless, upon a strange, uncultivated, shore, where an almost interminable forest echoed the howling of wild beasts, and the still more terrific yell of savages in human form? But as the heathen nations of Canaan gradually gave way before that people whom God appointed to take their place, so it has been here.

Whether in point of fertility our country can boast of any thing equal to the clusters of Eshcol, is a question not easily answered; nor would it be of much use to attempt to answer it. But without going abroad, we can have all the necessaries, and as many of the luxuries of life as would tend to our good. However less productive our country may be than Canaan, anciently, was, the extent of it allows of much larger portions to the people.

As to government, when the Israelites rejected God they had a king to rule over them; and in that king, often a man very wicked, and oppressive. If we have unprincipled, and wicked, rulers, the fault is our own; for we have such as we choose and we have an opportunity to choose such as are good.

All the sacred scriptures which that people ever had we have; and in addition the whole of the New Testament.

Has our return for favors, temporal, and spiritual, which we have received, been more in accordance to our duty than that of Israel? Have their murmurings, of which we have an account, made us so ashamed for them, that we have not murmured ourselves? If we have had no Aaron to make us a molten calf, has not our avarice made us gods of gold? Has not extortion, in a variety of ways, been practised among us; and does it not continue to be practised, while the consequence is, that many of the people are reduced to the dimensions of Pharaoh's lean kine; and others

have grown fat, as the heifer at grass? To give, in detail, the subject of sin, as it may be seen in this nation, would be a task as tedious as it would be unnecessary.

If the single sin of intemperance were given up, our coffers would be filled, and there would be no want of means to accomplish the desirable purposes of life, whether private, or public. Figures will show what a tax is brought upon every place for the slow poison that is consumed in it. To this expense of property, may be added the expense of health; and life; and various other evils unavoidably connected with such a course.

Many however, who are not addicted to intemperance, choose to lay out what they have in vanity, rather than to honor the Lord with their substance; and though they would not give the widow's mite to spread the gospel over the earth, yet would give to the utmost of their ability to promote an object from which nothing but evil can be expected. Impiety, and immortality, would furnish many articles for consideration, but as the consideration of them would excite many unpleasant sensations, we let them pass.

The punishment which we have received for our sins, is nothing compared with our deserts; and nothing compared with what Israel experienced. As a nation we have never been carried into captivity; and with respect to war, we have had but a small portion of its horrors, and distresses. It is true, much blood has been shed; and many have been made fatherless, and widows; and the page of their history, if written, would be filled with lamentation, mourning, and woe. But peace is a blessing which we have generally enjoyed.

Our land likewise, has never been destitute of bread for its inhabitants. Rarely has any thing like scarcity been known; whereas we have accounts of several distressing seasons of famine in the land of Canaan, where the Israelites were settled, so that in some instances, the infant children were made use of for food, even by their own mothers.

The pestilence has repeatedly been in the country, and hurried multitudes into an untimely grave; but still, in respect to this, we have been a favored people.

The most important circumstances, however, in which we differ from Israel at present, is this, that God has not given us up as a people, to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart; but is manifesting himself in a way of mercy, in the formation, and enlargement, of churches; and in the promotion of the great interests of religion, and morality. In our land religion has had many glorious revivals; but among the people of Israel, with the exception of a few individuals, nothing of this kind had been witnessed for many centuries.

Every duty is attended with profit to those who duly perform it. To fast upon certain occasions, is a duty concerning which there can be no question; for it is obviously a dictate of nature; and it holds a conspicuous place among the things which God requires in his Word.

If we are called upon for proof, that any advantage results from keeping a fast, we can draw our proof from the best source.

When in the days of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Ezra, accompanied with a number of his countrymen, went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, commissioned to regulate, and superintend the concerns of the Jews in that city, and country, choosing rather to trust in the Lord, than to ask of the king a band of soldiers to protect him, and his companions, and the treasures which they carried, against the Arabians who infested the desert, he proclaimed a fast at the river Ahava, and the consequence was, that he, and all who were with him, went on unmolested, and arrived safely at the place of their destination; though the journey took up almost four months. This would have been a hazardous, and presumptuous, undertaking, for such a little defenceless band, trusting in any thing but the arm of Almighty power. The measure adopted by Ezra was so evidently well chosen, that all the armed force which Artaxerxes could have furnished, might have been overcome, and thus the whole purpose would have failed, had human aid been sought, in preference to help from God.

How wonderful was the deliverance which the Jews experienced at Shushan, notwithstanding the irreversible decree which wicked Haman had procured for their destruc-

tion! But had it not been for the Fast observed by Esther, and enjoined by her upon all the Jews, there is not the least reason to think, that any measure would have been adopted to counteract the fatal one which was about to go into operation. Had not God disposed the heart of the king to mercy, instead of obtaining any favor for her countrymen, Esther would have lost her own life, for going uncalled for, into his presence.

Ahab, when Elijah denounced the judgments of heaven against him, had recourse to fasting; and though he seems not to have repented of his sins, he appears so far to have been accepted, that the judgments threatened, were not sent during his life.

The Fast that was kept at Nineveh, when Jonah was sent as God's messenger to declare that the destruction of the city was at hand, was a memorable Fast; and with such peculiar marks of humiliation was it attended; and with so much sincerity; that the destroying angel, who appeared to be entering with his drawn sword in his hand, turned back, and passed away.

Quite recently, a Fast was observed in a town not far distant from us, in which is a flourishing Seminary of learning; and now the students, with scarcely an individual exception; and many of the inhabitants; are rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. The Fast observed seven years ago in this place, appeared to be sanctified; and many of the people will look back to that time, as the commencement of their serious thoughts, and of their real, and rational enjoyment. During that season of attention to religion, about one hundred new members were added to the church.

This fast is as remarkable as that was; but for very different reasons. That mind which is not filled with gloomy reflections, must be very little exercised with respect to the state of our affairs. Looking over the record I find, that since the Fast alluded to, nineteen members of the church, have left us for the eternal world, while only eight have been added; half of whom have come from other churches. Here is a loss of eleven members from the body; while those are counted who have been received from abroad; and while no account is taken of those who have left this church;

for some other: Those who have died, belonging to the society, but not to the church, need not be particularly named, nor numbered; for parents, and children; husbands, and wives; brethren, and sisters, will recollect who they are.

The earth has opened to receive a considerable number of persons, who have come to their graves in a full age like as a shock of corn cometh in its season. Some in the meridian of life have been taken from the busy scenes in which they were engaged, and introduced into a world, where objects were presented to them, of which before, they had but a faint conception. The roses too have faded on the cheek of youth, and beauty; and the congregation of the dead has been increased by the accession of new members, who because they had spent but little time in the world, might be expecting long to be connected with the congregation of the living. The year past with little sickness attending it, has been more than ordinarily a year of death among us; and of late some instances have occurred, calling for special consideration.

Who is there that says, Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up? Do those who profess to be the people of God appear to be joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; or is there a diversity of opinions, with respect to practical religion, in cases so plain, as to require no exposition of the law, to make them plainer? Does brotherly love continue; and do the brethren manifest the same condescension that St. Paul did, when he said with reference to a matter, which in other circumstances, he would have managed differently, Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth lest I make my brother to offend: or do they set the judgment of others at defiance? Do we remember our obligations to God; and to one another, or have we forgotten, that we entered into a solemn covenant to be a peculiar people; and to let our light so shine before men, that they might see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven?

Are we who are heads of families, constant according to our engagement, to present the morning, and evening, sacrifice, upon the family altar; and are we careful to avoid those places where devotion is never cultivated; and not to engage in any thing upon which we should shudder to ask the blessing of God: or have we substituted for Gospel regulations, principles of free-thinking, and are we disposed to look down with mingled emotions of pity, and scorn, upon those who disapprove of the use which we make of our christian liberty?

Let us remember, that St. Paul said to the Corinthians, Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves; how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates? The case calls for no elaborate investigation, for we have only to inquire, whether we should speak thus, or act so, if Christ were in us, dictating to us what to say, and what to do. Christ said to his disciples, Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world; and it will, invariably, be found, that the moral condition of societies, is good, or bad, according to the condition of the churches which are connected with them, and which make a part of them.

The young are not all children of the church; but some of them are; and their influence will either do good, or evil, to others, according to the manner in which it is exerted. If young persons are thoughtless, and dissipated, older persons are partakers of their sins; and when at the great day the book shall be opened for a final settlement, much will be found charged to the unfaithfulness of parents, and other authorized guardians.

If I must be hated by any of my people, let me be hated for the same reason that Micaiah was; for I cannot prophesy good, when nothing but evil is presented before me; and I cannot be silent while I remember the command of God to Isaiah, Cry aloud; spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.

While I consider myself under obligation to testify against what appears to me to be wrong in others, I am willing, that they should testify against what appears to them

to be wrong in me; provided the word of God be made the standard of judgment; and I hold myself in readiness to make all the satisfaction in my power, to any one, whom I may have injured in name or estate.

But my brethren, and friends, whether it is owing to dejection, or distraction, I find no language, in which to express the unpleasant feelings which I have, by day, and by night, in relation to this society, and church; and I have not a particle of divine knowledge, nor a ray of reason, if the signs of the times, as we are respected, are not of the most ominous kind. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; That I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow, in my heart. A better minister might make you a better people; and I should rejoice to see your zeal all directed to the glory of God; and the good of your souls, through whatever instrumentality it might be effected. If I ever meet you all again, it is quite improbable that I shall upon such an occasion as the present, for this year must be different from years that are gone by, if we all live to see the next annual Fast.

SERMON XIII.

CONCIO.

JEREMIAH xx, 9.

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

THE prophets, reckoning from Moses to Malachi, flourished among the Israelites, in a continued succession, as the ministers of God's dispensations to that people for above a thousand years.

Though there were schools of the prophets, the institution of which is attributed to Samuel; and though those schools might be of great spiritual utility, we are guarded against over-rating their importance, and taught to consider, that the spirit of prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but; that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Jeremiah was of sacerdotal extraction, and a native of Anathoth; which was situated about three miles from Jerusalem, and which, as we learn from the twenty first chapter of Joshua, was given to the priests. As he was sanctified in the womb, and ordained a prophet unto the nations, his determination no more to do the duties of his office, comes forcibly as a proof of the declaration that every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.

Upon supposition, that there is any fitness in us for the place which we occupy, does not the text my dear and respected, brethren, record our own experience? Are we

not often discouraged by the same considerations which produced dejection in the mind of Jeremiah; and are we not stimulated to a continuance in our work, by the same motives which made him weary with forbearing? Since there is a similarity in the circumstances of those who stand as public teachers of religion, it may be well for us to think why they wish at any time to relinquish their employment; what prevents them from executing their resolution, and what message they will deliver, when they undertake to speak for God.

First. Why do those who are in the ministerial office, ever so regard their work, as to be weary of it, and to wish to have it lodged in other hands? The fact is undeniable; and the reasons are obvious, and strong; when no stronger reasons present themselves, to counteract them, and abate their force.

A sense of insufficiency is the first of these reasons. When Moses was directed to go and deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, the task appeared too hard, and he readily found an excuse which to him seemed sufficient. O my Lord I am not eloquent; neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. Jeremiah's answer to God's first address, betokens similar feelings of self-diffidence. Ah Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child. There was some truth in what he said, for he was but about fourteen years of age. Older persons however must be attended with the same difficulty, and induced to exclaim in the language of St. Paul, Who is sufficient for these things? The deficiencies of the best qualified man are very great, and of many kinds.

The knowledge which we have of our business is exceedingly superficial; and of course, as in other concerns, so in this, our work will drag heavily, in proportion to the scantiness of our ideas with regard to it. Beside occasional al services, every seventh day of a ministerial life, calls for the exhibition of important truth, and though we should not seek for the wisdom of words, yet we ought to bear in mind, that he whose business it is to expound the scriptures,

should be able, like the householder, to bring out of his treasures, things new, as well as old.

Without pretending to know, I may be allowed to believe, that many worthy ministers of the gospel separate from their people, and assume a new charge, in order to lighten their burdens, by a rehearsal of their discourses. The scriptures, being of divine original, must form a boundless theme for contemplation; but who does not sometimes, from the stupidity, and barrenness of his own mind, have occasion to read over whole chapters, and even books, without fastening upon any thing which will furnish him with materials for a sermon? If what is here said, do not apply to the case of others, let me tell you, that one in human form, sat for the picture; and, that this is exactly his own likeness.

A difficulty still greater than this, is, that nonconformity of life, of which every one must be conscious who makes observations upon himself. Whatever else we may fail of remembering, we shall hardly forget the pungent question, Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Too much of the Sabbath day's solemnity, usually, wears off from us by friction with the world in the course of the week. However sincerely, and earnestly, we may have exhorted others to let their light shine, and to have their conversation always with grace, seasoned with salt, we shall need no accuser but our own conscience to show us, that our course is rather a curve than a parallel line with the straight path in which our Master walked. Isaiah's conviction is surely, not expressed in language too strong to be suitable to any other person. Wo is me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king; the Lord of hosts! When the whole head appears to be sick, and the whole heart faint; we have a powerful inducement within ourselves to say with Moses, O my Lord, send I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

A second discouragement to the ministers of the gospel arises from without, and is well stated in our context. For I heard the defaming of many; fear on every side. Report say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched

for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. The persons here spoken of were intimate acquaintances of the prophet, for he calls them his familiars; and from this circumstance there is reason to believe, that they pretended esteem, and affection for him. They watched for his halting, and they had the best opportunity by being so much with him. They said to others, or probably among themselves, report; tell something, true or false, against Jeremiah; and we will go with it to the king; or spread it around, that it may work for his damage. To be altogether free from perils arising from false brethren, is no common thing. Who is there, in such a place as ours, whose sentiments have not been misrepresented, as they have been advanced from the desk; or brought forward in a more private way? St. Paul was divinely inspired, and of course, his doctrine was free from all error. Yet he was impeached like those who are liable to mistake; and it was said of him, that he exhorted to the practice of evil, whose condemnation he allowed to be just, in order, that good might result from it. Sometimes political views, and endeavors incompatible with the general weal, are without any foundation, attributed to ministers, by those whose hearts are filled with enmity against them, and the cry is, These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also. If they favor those civil rulers who favor the cause of religion, they are spoken of as basely endeavoring to link the church with the state; and represented as the worshippers of mammon, and not the servants of God.

If any one in the ministry, either from a patrimony, or in consequence of his own prudent management of his stipulated support, however scanty in itself, have acquired somewhat more than falls to the common lot, perhaps, it is said, with the eye of envy glancing at the roof which shelters him, Where is the house of the prince; and where are the dwelling places of the wicked! Those who cramped in their circumstances, pay some share of attention to the concerns of the present life, are charged with being actuated by motives merely selfish; and those who give up their mortal interest altogether, and devote themselves more im-

mediately to the service of God, are denominated drones, who live on the honey of the hive, and who deserve to be expelled by the industrious bees and put to death for their indolence.

Thus we may pipe unto them and they will not dance; we may mourn unto them and they will not lament. The many slanders which are heaped upon persons of our profession, and often from those too, from whom we have reason to expect better treatment, cannot all be numbered and named at present. We can all adopt the language of David, in the fifty fifth psalm, if placed in a similar situation, For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it, neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal; my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

A third discouragement is the avowed determination of sinners to oppose all endeavors which are made for their benefit. When Jeremiah remonstrated with the Jews, who dwelt in Egypt, on account of their idolatrous practices, and set before them the judgments of God which they must expect, if they did not repent, and reform, they entered into no consideration of the subject; but replied in language most provoking to God, and disheartening to his prophet, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. They acknowledged, because they could not deny it, that he spoke to them in the name of the Lord; and yet, so resolved were they to pursue their own course, that they would not so much as hearken to what he communicated from such high, and irresistible, authority. The same is the disposition of human nature every where, and at all times, and in vain do we look for reasonableness of conduct, among the effects of unbelief. Our people will live a prayerless life; parents will neglect the religious education of their children; young persons will collect in giddy, and vain, circles; ideal sources of profit, and pleasure, will be resorted to generally; and those things, in some instances, will be persisted in, professedly, to oppose counsels from the desk.

These are among the things which operate to discourage the ministers of the gospel. A longer recital might easily be made, which would include many outrages upon God's public servants. Our imagination brings into view the dungeon, where the prophet, whose words we are considering, sunk into the mire, and where he would have perished had it not been for the kind interference of Ebed-melech, who having obtained permission of the king, assisted in drawing him up with cords from that horrible place. Whether dungeons will be prepared for us, is known only to him to whom all things are known. Certain it is however, that in our enlightened times, and within the bounds of the Commonwealth in which we live, the doors of the sanctuary have been closed, and the avenue to the desk guarded against one of our brethren, whose official duty it was to perform the part of a public teacher of religion in that place. Whether it is expedient to tell this in Gath, and to publish it in the streets of Askelon, you are to be the judges.

Second. Though Jeremiah, under his heavy burdens, determined to be silent, he found it impossible. Hard it was to speak, but still harder was it to forbear. May those reasons which he could not withstand, ever be powerful, and influential, with us. Let us review them at this time.

The appointment of God comes first in order. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant. This appointment Jeremiah was to fulfil, not by doing the things himself, but by declaring, that they would be done. If the command of a parent, or of a master, or of a ruler, among men, must be obeyed, how much stronger obligation is he under to obedience, who has received a command directly from the mouth of God! There may be much apparent difficulty in the performance of our work; but to neglect it is impossible, when God has said, it shall be done; and we shall do it. When the Israelites were escaping from Egypt, the Red sea met them as they advanced, the Egyptian hosts pressed on their rear; and mountains walled them in on the right hand and on the left. There was much to produce despondency; but they had set out for the land of Canaan, and

they were under necessity to proceed. The Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel; that they go forward. Whatever inducements the people had to stop, this order presented stronger inducements to them to continue their march. St. Paul has informed us how he felt himself bound by his commission. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. A person may relinquish husbandry for merchandize; or both for the practice of the law, and have no scruples of conscience respecting a change of his condition; but he who has been called into the ministry; who has consented to an induction to his office, by the solemn imposition of hands; and who has been made by the Holy Ghost, an overseer to the flock, though he may be tempted to desist, will be powerfully urged to pursue his work, from the persuasion, that it is the work which God has given him to do; neither will he give it up, unless convinced, that he has a discharge from the same authority which at first marked out his employment.

To this consideration may be added the promise which God has made to be present with those who are engaged to speak in his name. Jeremiah had this promise and, undoubtedly, felt the force of it. In this language it was communicated to him. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Here is omnipotence pledged for his protection. When Moses excused himself from undertaking to deliver Israel, the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth; or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing or the blind; have not I the Lord? Now therefore go; and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. When our Savior was about to leave the world, and ascend to the heavens from which he had come down, he thus addressed himself to the eleven disciples, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father; and of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world: The promise which forms the conclusion here, is so worded, that we must consider it as made to the ministry, in all ages, and not confined to those individuals to whom it was first communicated, and who could not be expected to live to the end of the world.

If amidst the many perplexities which attend our arduous undertaking, we are sensible, that we stand in need of counsel, he whose name is the Counsellor, is so near to us, if we are really engaged in his service, that we need not move from our place in order to be informed in the best possible manner, what measures will be most conducive to the accomplishment of our purpose. Should others, from wrong motives, give us a wrong direction, we can baffle all their designs, and find out the way of our duty, as Nehemiah did by keeping up an intercourse with God.

Where there is sin there is confusion. Hence as we are sinners, our minds may be in so confused a state, that we ourselves shall be sensible of our own unfitness to perform the duties of our office, and on this account be disposed to omit them, and let the office pass to others. But in such a condition of trouble, how reviving is the recollection, that when the earth was without form, and void and when darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters! That Spirit of God who will be with us, if we are the children of God, can easily reduce all things to order in his own temple; and however thick the darkness, we may confidently expect him to say, Let there be light.

The people of God, and especially God's ministers, form but a little, and feeble flock; and destitute of all means of defence but their own, terrible to them would be the prowling wolves of the wilderness of this world! But if their Shepherd is with them, his banner is over them; and they are as in a fold into which no beast of the forest will ever be able to find a passage. What soldier of Jesus Christ will be afraid to go where his all-conquering Captain leads the way, and insures the victory?

The first preachers of the gospel, notwithstanding all their personal disadvantages; and notwithstanding the vio-

lently opposing attitude of the world; were so successful, that with our eye fixed upon them, we can hardly fail of deriving a third motive to resolution, and perseverance. Matthew was a publican, or tax gatherer; and probably, had learning enough to conduct that business; but of the other apostles, some are known to have been fishermen; and there is reason to believe, that the same was the occupation of all. A portrait, large as life, is drawn of this company in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.

Those who judge after the flesh, would at once conclude that those persons would have done well to continue, the one at the receipt of custom; and the other in some place advantageous for the catching of fish. They were however, called from an employment which experience had made them acquainted with, and set to do that for which no school of science had qualified their minds.

Had the world been tractable, a good disposition in the apostles, without much ability to teach, might have served to excite attention, and thus, have prepared the way for a change of opinions, and for a new course of life. But we all know, that the world has ever been stubborn as the oak, and, that at that time, the Jews and the Gentiles, making the body of mankind, stood bristling with their prejudices, and superstitions; as the porcupine erects and points every quill to attack an assailant. Of the three great sects in religion, and philosophy, among the Jews, the pharisees, the sadducees, and the essenes, each one was hostile to the gospel and the common people who attached themselves, to one, or to another, of these sects, according to circumstances, though they panted for a deliverer, did not wish for deliverance from sin. The object held up by the apostles was very different from that upon which the eager eyes of expectation among their countrymen were fastened. Nor was there apparently more encouragement to turn to

the Gentiles. They had their idol gods under many names, whose worship, though it might require expensive sacrifices, called not for that which depraved nature opposes with all its force, the sacrifice of its own lusts and corruptions.

The history which we have, though brief, will abundantly show us the difficulty of that undertaking, in which the apostles were engaged. The same history will likewise teach us, that feeble instruments, in the mighty hand of God, effectually prostrated all the opposition which was made by an arm of flesh. Those Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and those of Cilicia, and of Asia, constituting a synagogue of Satan, were not able to resist the wisdom, and the spirit, with which even Stephen, spoke who was in office but a deacon; and that because he was full of faith, and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people. In vain was the council convened at Jerusalem, for the special purpose of intimidating and silencing Peter, and John. Their boldness was unconquerable: thousands by their instrumentality, were brought to believe, and, such was the hold that their doctrine had taken upon the people, that the rulers were afraid to inflict punishment, and were obliged to dismiss them with only threats and prohibitions. It is true that most of God's ministering servants, in the first days of christianity, came to their death, by the hand of violence; but not until they had accomplished, as an hireling their day; not until they had sown a wide field with the good seed of the gospel. He who regards primarily, the cause which he advocates, and not his own person, will find much to encourage him in the record respecting the early spread of Christ's religion.

Thirdly. If sensible that we ought to speak, what message shall we communicate, in order to fulfil our commission, and so secure to ourselves the approbation of our own consciences and of God? Much of that which is called preaching, is, unquestionably, but the song of lullaby, dictated by him who carries on his designs most successfully, when the world lies most profoundly asleep. Here it cannot be said, that we are left to form our own opinions upon so vast a subject. We have our orders from him under whose authority we act. When the word of the Lord came unto

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Jonah the second time, this was the direction which he received: Arise, go into Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. Jonah's commission was such as left him no choice of his subject; nor of the manner of handling it. When Balaam, by permission, went to Balak, he said, Lo I am come unto thee, have I now any power at all, to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. The event corresponded with the declaration. The address to Ezekiel limited him likewise. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and warn the people from me.

In these instances however, more particular, and direct communications, were made than in ordinary cases can be expected. Our orders are more general. We gather the sum of our duty from the following passage. And when Silas, and Timotheus, were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus is Christ. That this is all which it was of any consequence for him to testify, appears from the reply of our Savior to those who asked him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent. If therefore, we understand, and hold forth, that Jesus is the Christ, we are able ministers of the New Testament; but if we fail in this, our preaching is vain; and their faith is vain also, who being our hearers, are led to adopt our opinions.

Three things, being all the things which are fundamental, are evidently comprised in what St. Paul testified to the Jews. The being, and character, of God, is one thing; the state of man by nature is another, and what salvation consists in, together with the way of obtaining it, is the third. If Jesus is the Christ, then is he the anointed of God, for anointed is the signification of his name; consequently, we cannot preach that Jesus is the Christ, without asserting the first, and most important of all truths, that there is a God.

Since however there have been lords many and gods many, acknowledged in name, and worshipped in ignorance,

the bare persuasion, that there is a God; and, that there is but one, is not sufficient, without some just conceptions of his character. It must be apparent, that there is no rock like our God, even our enemies themselves being the judges. We have such a history of Jesus Christ; that we can discover something of all his natural, and moral, attributes; and if he is God's anointed; and the Son of God; it must be true, that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

That we may learn what the invisible God is, from what we can see in the person of Christ, appears evident from the reply which Philip received from his Lord, when he said to him, Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then shew us the Father. Since there is nothing to be found in the history of Christ's conversation, and conduct, but what is evidently the effect of holiness, setting aside all positive declarations which respect this affair, we have the most unquestionable premises from which to draw the conclusion, that holiness must be the nature of God. Holiness being a term which denotes moral perfection, all natural perfection may here be left out of the question, if God be holy, he must be infinitely just, and infinitely merciful. Of these two attributes, which exist together in God, and display themselves in the most entire harmony, the latter is quite acceptable to human nature; but the former is exceedingly offensive. If however, we turn away with abhorrence, from the unjust man, benevolent as his deeds of charity may bespeak him, it is certain, that justice is as essential to the glory, and consequently to the perfection, of God, as his mercy; and if we have suitable conceptions of the one, we must admit the other. The mercy of God is spoken of, in terms of high sounding applause by those who advance doctrines most corrupt in their nature, and most dangerous in their tendency; while his justice passes unmentioned or if brought into view, is considered as merely imaginary; a spectre conjured up by the cunning to terrify the weak. We have not

so learned Christ, if so be, that we have heard him, and have been taught of him as the truth is in Jesus.

Equally important with just ideas of God, is it for us, in performing our work, to give a correct representation of the moral state of man. That there is much ignorance upon this subject, the proofs are abundant, both of ancient, and of modern date. Korah, and those who acted with him, or one speaking for the rest, said to Moses, and Aaron, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them. Those persons must have had strange ideas of holiness, or they never could have made such an assertion. Moses thought differently, for he called them a stiff-necked people, and indeed God called them so likewise. Their conduct, of itself, proves their want of holiness. Thus the gainsaying of Core, seems to have respected, not only the authority of Moses, and Aaron, but also a fundamental doctrine of religion.

Has not the same error been obstinately persisted in from the earliest days of sin in our world to the present time? He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. It is well known to us all, that there has been, of late a dreadful calamity by fire, in a part of our country, lying to the south of us. Every feeling heart must throb at the recollection of that night, which witnessed the lighting up of the theatre in Richmond, when dying shrieks followed in quick succession, shouts of applause; and human bodies clinging one to another, lay in heaps, as combustibles to feed the all devouring flame. But what reflections are made upon this event by the living, who by tender ties were most intimately connected with and concerned for, the dead? One bereaved parent writes to another, and pours out his lamentations in unaffected grief, while he informs him, that those who fell victims to the fire, have gone to a happier world. A member rises on the floor of Congress, and in his place, gravely moves, that that august body go into mourning; and that each one testify his sorrow, by the usual badge of crape upon his arm. Let this pass for what it is worth.

But the preamble to the motion contains a sentiment too much like that of Korah, for it asserts what could not be

known, that while the ashes of the dead were mingled with the dust, their spirits had ascended to heaven. If any who are prepared to sing the new song, can be delighted with the exhibitions of the stage, it is, at least, quite questionable, whether among so many, there were not some, who were found with dark lamps, and destitute of oil, when the midnight cry was made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him.

If heaven were the certain home of all, death would be welcome at any time, and in any shape, but the scriptures teach us, that there is a hell, as well as a heaven; and, that the carnal mind, or the natural man, being enmity against God, will not be subject to the law of God, and of course, cannot have a place in heaven, where all bow the knee, and cast their crowns before the feet of him who sits upon the throne.

Many stanch advocates we find for virtue, who by the term, mean nothing more than honesty; or generosity; or thrift; or cleanliness; or a compound of these ingredients. But may there not be one, or all, of these where there is a repugnancy to God's government, a hatred to his nature; and of course, a want of qualification for that state of blessedness, which is constituted by the love of God? Should any one ask me, Is not grass good; and is not grain? I would answer, Both are good in their place; but neither is good, as a material for the construction of ships; nor for the purpose of clothing. So the moral virtues should not be undervalued. The state of society would be still more deplorable than it now is, if left wholly without them; but if they do not amount to reconciliation with God, they come short of the one thing needful to man. By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.

What salvation consists in, together with the way of obtaining it, must now in the last place be briefly stated. Heaven is not held by right of possession, as men sometimes get a farm; nor can we seize upon the inheritance, in consequence of having killed the heir. The pardon of our sins, and the sanctification of our nature, if not salvation itself, are indispensable prerequisites to it. He who is the

Savior is also called the salvation; and if we be not reprobates, Christ is in us the hope of glory. Jesus is a name denoting, that he to whom it belongs, saves his people from their sins. If that mind be in us which was also in Jesus, if we have his spirit, then are we his disciples; then have we that salvation which he purchased with his blood.

This salvation is, undoubtedly, a great affair, but how is it to be obtained? Should any one inquire what must I do to be saved; the only proper answer would be, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing more to be done, and nothing less. But the inquirer may be like the blind man restored to sight, who wanted farther information, and said, Who is the Lord, that I might believe on him? This question as much deserves an answer as any previous one; and the words in which Christ replied should never be forgotten. Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee: Christ is no longer in our world; but his word is here; and when we refer an inquirer to his Word, it is as if we pointed to his person. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Exceptions to a general rule, are not to be substituted for the rule itself.

Though Christ has been found of those who sought him not, it would be wrong to tell a person, that the way to find him, must be, not to seek him. To the ignorant Jews the Savior thus addressed himself: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. The scriptures are a sealed book, it is true, to the natural man; but behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

We learn from high authority, that men; as well others as christians, ought always; to pray, and not to faint. St. James, addressing the twelve tribes, which undoubtedly, included many destitute of religion, said, If any of you lack wisdom; let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith. Here is the duty enjoined; and a caution given not to rest in the duty. Since God only can teach us, and since in his Word is to be found what we have to learn, we are as in a school, with our book in our hand, and

our preceptor by our side, waiting to assist us, and expecting, that we will call upon him for whatever help we need.

My brethren, our work is great; and our time is short. Let us be valiant for the truth. Though more frequently discouraged perhaps, than any of you, I am sensible, that discouragements come from no good quarter. To each of God's faithful ministers, and to each of his private servants, this cheering address is appropriate. Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. What is such a person like? I borrow a simile from Dr. Goldsmith, who, whatever he was himself, has well described a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. What is he like?

Like some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form;
 Swells from the vale; and midway leaves the storm:
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head!

SERMON XIV.

CONCIO.

JAMES v, 20.

Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

THESE words are addressed to all christians; but more especially do they apply to the ministers of the Gospel. Let him know, are words emphatical. Each minister ought eagerly to catch the sound; and deeply to feel the force of the words. Shall it be our business, at this time, to dissect this passage of the Apostle, that we may recollect what is our main concern, as men, and as ministers?

If the scripture now brought into view is not misapprehended by the present preacher, it teaches us, that the sinner is in an error; that he must be converted; that human instruments may be employed in the work of conversion; and, that those who are instrumental in converting others, shall have the blessedness of saving souls from death, and of hiding the multitude of sins which have been committed by their converts.

First. The sinner, under whatever more definite name he may rank, is in an error. The error is not physical, but moral; and not partial, but total. So the scriptures teach, and so the case appears upon examination.

In the discussion of this particular, should things be touched upon which never can be found together, it will be recollected, that error cannot be formed into a system.

The double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Now he thinks thus; and then so.

Let us begin with the error of the sinner, as God is respected. There are times, when fool indeed, he says in his heart, there is no God. This is so gross an error, that it commonly shames him who entertains it. Deny the being of a God, and causes and effects are terms, to you, without a meaning. Deny the being of a God, and you cannot, with any consistency, say who built your house; nor who made your coat? As true as it is, that every house was builded by some man, so true it is, that he who built all things, is God. God made the country, and man made the town. The two parts of this statement hang in equipoise, like the two parts of the balance. The atheistical sinner is therefore, in an error.

But the sinner, we will suppose, acknowledges a God. Still not being acquainted with God, his conceptions of him are all erroneous. When the sinner believes the service of God to be hard, can he see it in the true light? God requires all our time; the exercise of all our faculties, the use of all our means; and the diligent improvement of all our opportunities. Still is his service called reasonable; and to serve him, and to be free, are represented as the same thing.

Let us look at the law to see what it requires. Love is the one great principle inculcated. Those who never exercised love in any way, may discover in themselves, that the opposite of it is productive of much evil. All men have much more satisfaction, if it be proper to say, that all men have any satisfaction, in those for whom they have a regard, and affection, than they have in any other persons. To multiply the objects of affection is therefore, to increase the satisfaction of life. If it does me good to love one, it will do me more good to love all, in proportion. The sinner supposes, that the pleasure which he takes with his friends, arises from their friendship to him. But this is a mistake. We do not always enjoy the company, and conversation of those who wish, and labor to promote our best interest. It is from our own regard to our friends, and not from their regard to us, that the sweets of friendly intercourse arise.

Thus it appears, that those affections which the law of God requires of us towards our fellow men, instead of being prejudicial, are intimately interwoven with our pleasure; and consequently, with our profit.

If then, we find our advantage in exercising love towards man, who is so unworthy an object, what incalculable satisfaction must there be in loving God! Added to every consideration of duty, is the powerful attraction of that being, who centers in himself all excellency, and amiableness! We attend the sick man's bed, and watch his every motion, with a view of being serviceable to him; but we look on mountains, and cataracts; fixed by their tremendous grandeur; we trace the bending of the yellow harvest because there is beauty in it; and we survey the green mantle with which Spring adorns the earth, because it is pleasing to the eye, and to the mind. If natural beauties which are fading, and perishable, excite our notice in so high a degree, and delight us so greatly, the perfections, of God, fastening in the mind, must have an infinitely superior effect.

The practice which the law of God points out for us, is no less calculated for our advantage, than the principle. Integrity, and humanity of conduct, towards all men; and the public, and private worship of God; together with the frequent, and diligent reading of the scriptures, bring their own benefit with them. Indeed are we commanded to do any thing, in any department of life, which has any tendency to our detriment? If so, let the husband; or the wife; let the parent, or the child; let the master, or the servant; let the ruler, or the subject; let the minister, or the hearer, say what it is. If all are silent when thus called upon, it is taken for granted, that nothing can be found.

The sinner often errs in his calculations upon the mercy of God. He does not, for he cannot, overrate it; but still he does that which amounts to the same, for he expects more from it, than can be realized; or rather he expects benefits in a way, in which mercy cannot bestow them. God will do in the exercise of mercy, whatever he can do in the exercise of justice. That hope only, is rationally entertained, which respects these two equal, and harmonious, attributes.

If I have a cause to be tried before a human tribunal, knowing that the laws must decide, I can expect nothing from the clemency of the court. Mercy, and justice, met, and had their full display in the person of man's substitute; and they must be seen again together, in the decisions of the great day. If it be ascertained that a person cannot consistently with strict justice, be saved; it will need no arguments to prove, that even infinite mercy will avail him nothing. All calculations upon mercy therefore, which leave justice out of the account, must be founded in error.

The sinner is likewise, in an error in what he thinks about himself. We will suppose him so sensual, as to be unconscious of a soul within him. That this is no uncommon case, the conversation, especially the conduct, of mankind, makes evident. But how much soever it may be denied; is there no soul? Is man but a piece of clock work; a machine, kept in motion by the force of steam; clay animated; a form quickened by means of nerves, and organs? Man has not the sagacity of the hound; he has not the cunning of the fox; he has not the strength of the lion; he soars not on the pinions of the eagle; nor does he see with the penetrating eye of the hawk; but he is lord of all. Born unable to help himself; constituted with powers, which require time for their maturity; and frail in his full strength: the reason within him; the soul with which God has endued him; stands forth his prominent advantage; and gives him the only superiority of which he is possessed.

That every thing in this world was intended to be subservient to man's use, is so evident, that time would be lost in proving it. Are the purposes of man however, this life only considered, of sufficient consequence to pay the expense of such an apparatus? We should suppose, that man, the lord of the creation, would be designed for enjoyments of the first rank, as well as for the highest seat of dominion. But can the cattle upon a thousand hills make that man, who is the owner of them, so happy, as they are themselves? Man's uneasiness is a proof of his immortal existence. Loweth the ox over his fodder? All the hopes, and all the fears, which possess us, with respect to a state beyond our present being, show, that such a state awaits us.

Does the unbeliever derive any argument to countenance him in this matter, from the death, and interment of the body? Then may the husbandman conclude that he has lost his grain, because he has thrown it into the furrows of his field. Then may we despair of seeing any more vegetation, when winter freezes the ground; when the trees present their leafless branches; and the fields look pale with death. Then may we say the serpents race is extinct, for each individual is frozen like a stick. If we need revelation to settle our minds with respect to the soul, and its immortality, the world of nature cries out of the possibility and probability, of the doctrine.

But if the sinner do not dispute the existence of a soul, he is still in an error relative to the state of it, relative to his own moral character. His iniquities are bound up; his sin is hidden. His justification of himself may be set down for condemnation. Should he say, that he is no liar; he might be told that a denial of Jesus as the Christ constitutes a man a liar of the first stamp. Should he plead that he is no thief; he might be asked whether he has not robbed God? Should he contend, that he is no murderer; it might be replied, that he is, if he hates any brother in Adam's family. Should he boast, that he is not an adulterer, he might be inquired of, whether he has made a covenant with his eyes? Should he plead, in a word, a general conformity to the law; its spirituality might be shown him; and he might be notified, that the first commandment requires all the heart to be given to God; and, that the second is like it, requiring us to love others as we love ourselves.

Can any one bring the state of society under observation, and account for its disorders, without admitting sin to be the great operating evil? Can any one look at his own heart, and say, that God made man such as he now finds himself? As well might the traveller, peeping through the openings in the lava, that covers Herculaneum; maintain, that the city was always covered with its present crust! Moral ruins are more widely spread through the world than those which are natural. Every country exhibits them; every town; every family; every person; every day; every ac-

tion; every thought. No language was ever yet employed too strong to describe sin.

The sinner is farther in an error, with regard to his idea of faith. Instead of the first place, it has the last place, or rather no place in his estimation. To believe is the whole work which we have to do, if we can depend upon him, from whom we received the law of heaven. The way to know the worth of faith, is to watch its motions, and trace its work. The faith that does not move, that does not work cannot be undervalued; but the faith of that is genuine, is of more worth than can be told. If the assent of the understanding, be faith, surely there are better things than faith. But if faith brings God into view, and eternity; shews man how much he has to hope, and to fear; if it regulates the heart, governs the tongue, and orders the life, then is it to the heart what the lungs are to the body.

The sinner is in an error, in not giving credit to the scriptures, as divine communications. Their history is the candle of the Lord; and the only light that shines on antiquity. Their doctrines are such as eclipse all that was ever taught in the schools of human wisdom. The prophecies which they contain, are many of them, astonishingly clear, and particular. The law which runs through the whole is holy; and just, and good. The miracles are well attested, and must have been wrought by power infinite. Time would fail even to name the evidences, upon which the claim of the scriptures to a divine origin is founded.

It ought never to be forgotten, that the scriptures have produced wonderful alterations in persons, of different grades; characters; and tempers. By their influence David was brought out of the obscurity where he had handled the crook, and the pipe of the shepherd, and qualified to sit upon a throne; and to tune the harp in praise of Israel's God. By their influence Saul of Tarsus was divested of his furious passions; stripped of the pride which much learning had rendered excessive; and his lofty looks were humbled at the sight of the cross. By their influence fishermen of Galilee became deeply versed in divine things; and could communicate their ideas in languages which they never studied. By their influence on the mind worldly

treasures have, in numberless instances, lost their value; and have been accounted vile as dross, and dung. How erroneous must he be who denies that divine power by which such mighty effects have been produced! But the error of the sinner cannot be traced through all its windings and variations.

Secondly, The sinner must be converted. If the picture now drawn is, so far as it goes, in any measure just; this is as certain as any unavoidable inference from premises laid down. At any rate, the doctrine of conversion runs as the life blood of the scriptures. It is not said, except you leave off lying; swearing; cheating; stealing; but except you be converted, and become as little children; you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. External reformation, though essentially necessary, is not sufficient of itself; nor of any consequence in the business of salvation, without conversion.

Who can think, that the person needs not to be converted, whose every sentiment is erroneous? The understanding must be set right. Those objects which present themselves under false colors, must be brought up in their true light. The disorder of the heart however, being the cause of the misconceptions of the mind, the heart must experience a thorough change. When a person believes, it is with the heart. When the heart goes after God, there is no want of evidence relative to his being, and perfections. Man's immortal existence is clearly proved, when the heart says let it be so; and every doctrine is made plain, where the heart has ceased its opposition.

The conversion of the sinner is the work of that God who is the maker of us all. He who hung the sun in the firmament, to give light to the natural world, must bring man out of his native darkness, or he will have no light. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. To create is the prerogative of God.

It has been thought that science would so meliorate the heart, as to answer man's purposes. But facts refute this theory. The Greeks and Romans tried this polish. Yet they were a rough and barbarous people; voracious as wolves, and cruel as the fell tiger. Who but a savage can

find amusement in beholding the bloody arena; or clap his hands when he sees the vanquished die! Had there been less science in France, or had the existing quantum been more equally diffused, the guillotine might have been an edge tool never known among the people; and the sucking boat might have never been employed to carry cargoes of men to the bottom of the sea!

Lamentable have been the effects of science on manners, and morals; that is of science falsely so called. This proud Usurper has laid nations under contribution; and boasting of new discoveries, and holding forth a new, and undefinable vocabulary, under pretence of vindicating the rights of man, has turned every right into a wrong.

As books of human origin cannot give right principles to the heart, so neither will a speculative acquaintance with the scriptures accomplish the purpose. The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses seat; All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do: but do ye not after their works, for they say and do not. A person may embrace the error of the sinner, and yet speak in some things the language of the saint; just as the parrot may be instructed to talk about things of which he has no understanding.

It appears then, that man requires not only to be altered but to be wholly renewed. Are the sills of your house rotten; is the foundation giving way; do the clap-boards hang by one end; are the windows broken to pieces; can you count the stars through the roof; is the chimney falling down; in a word, does the light zephyr make the building tremble; and will you think of repairing it! Will you not rather say, rase it, rase it; and let me not be buried under its ruins!

Thirdly. Though man must be converted, and though God must convert him; yet there is ample room for the employment of human instruments, and means. God is the author of nature, and of all its operations. Still the sun shines, and the rain descends, to bring forward vegetation; and according to the ordination of heaven, they are essential to its existence. The earth is suited to various harvests, but the husbandman must plow; sow; and reap. God nour-

ishes and brings us up as children. He however supplies us with parents, so needful to our helpless years. An order of men was appointed to officiate among the Jews, as priests, though God was the actual teacher. So also when the dispensation of the gospel commenced Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples; and though he taught much, he commissioned men to continue the work, and to spread the tidings of salvation. Paul speaks not in assuming language when he mentions his fellow laborers.

All that appears of religion in the ordinances of public worship, and in the service of those who wait at the altar, would be without a meaning, had instruments, and means, no place in the work of God. Those who have risen above ordinances, and the labors of the public teacher; and depend upon impulses, and immediate suggestions of the Spirit, may be called upon for their warrant to justify the course which they pursue.

It is granted, that there is no efficacy in man. But was there any healing quality in the waters of Jordan's stream? Was the multitude fed upon the substance inherent in the five barley loaves, and the two small fishes? The fragments of the entertainment, made a much greater quantity. Does not clay appear calculated rather to put out a man's eyes, than to restore a blind man to sight? When the man of God stretches himself upon the dead child, what connexion is there between that action and returning life? Even the staff of the prophet in the hand of Gehazi, might have brought back the departed spirit, had such been the appointed method of heaven. Is there death in the pot; it is enough to cry, circumstances being favorable, Then bring meal.

When our reasoning is coincident with facts, and founded upon them, or upon commands, it is always fair and conclusive. If men by divine assistance have wrought miracles, though there is no causality in them, there is instrumentality, and consequently use for them. If Paul had any spiritual children, and Timothy he calls by name as one, he surely had an under agency in the work of conversion.

Fourthly. Whoever is an instrument of converting another shall save a soul from death. Mark well the lan-

guage. It respects not the body, for that, upon any supposition, is doomed to die; but it respects an inextinguishable principle within each one, called the soul. Conversion is the same as salvation from death, because death is the sentence of God against every unconverted person. The sentence is not against the man, but against the character. Though the character is not an abstract thing; cannot have a separate existence, yet it is distinct, altogether, from the person. When a person becomes a convert therefore, though the sentence of death rested on his head the moment before, it is taken off never to rest upon him again.

This is not all; Jesus saves his people from their sins. When sin entered the heart of man, it struck like a paralytic shock upon all his moral faculties; nay, it was like the cold hand of death taking away that spiritual life of which he was previously possessed. We are represented as being by nature dead in trespasses, and sins.

To be sure the soul has an existence, but there is no life in it. Does any one say this is impossible. Let him take the matter into consideration. Yonder is the corpse of my friend. Shall I deny, that it is his body, because it is dead? Were the body of Jacob to be seen embalmed after the manner of Egypt, would it be less really the body of the son of Isaac, than it was when it was moving about the fields in the land of Goshen. Life is not necessary to our idea of a body. Why then may there not be a dead soul, as well as a dead body?

Conversion then appears to save a soul from death, as it sets aside condemnation; and as it removes sin, whose tendency is death; and whose very character is death. May we not here bring in an illustration? A person is doomed by a human tribunal to suffer death. Something however, new, and favorable occurs, and the doom is reversed. Is he now prepared to appear again in society, and to act his part once more, among men? His former sentence is now no bar in his way. But we will suppose, that he labors under a dangerous and apparently mortal distemper: indeed his case is viewed as hopeless. He must be cured of his distemper or he will die a natural death, notwithstanding the pardon which he holds in his hand.

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To be sure the soul has an existence, but there is no life in it. Does any one say this is impossible. Let him take the matter into consideration. Yonder is the corpse of my friend. Shall I deny, that it is his body, because it is dead? Were the body of Jacob to be seen embalmed after the manner of Egypt, would it be less really the body of the son of Isaac, than it was when it was moving about the fields in the land of Goshen. Life is not necessary to our idea of a body. Why then may there not be a dead soul, as well as a dead body?

Conversion then appears to save a soul from death, as it sets aside condemnation; and as it removes sin, whose tendency is death; and whose very character is death. May we not here bring in an illustration? A person is doomed by a human tribunal to suffer death. Something however, new, and favorable occurs, and the doom is reversed. Is he now prepared to appear again in society, and to act his part once more, among men? His former sentence is now no bar in his way. But we will suppose, that he labors under a dangerous and apparently mortal distemper: indeed his case is viewed as hopeless. He must be cured of his distemper or he will die a natural death, notwithstanding the pardon which he holds in his hand.

Fifthly. In the case of conversion, a multitude of sins is said to be hidden. But from whose sight are these sins hidden? God certainly will forever see them. Being the same yesterday, to day, and forever, he loses not the sight, nor the recollection of any thing. It would be absurd to suppose, that we can hide our conduct, or the least circumstance, from God. Neither is it to be supposed, that the converted sinner, will lose the recollection of his own misdeeds, and forget what manner of person he has been. If this is not the case in this world, there is no reason to think it will be in the next. On the contrary, there is much to lead us to believe, that the powers of memory will brighten, when the intrusions of the present scene are at end. The inhabitants of heaven find much of their enjoyment, probably, in the retrospect of life and particularly, in the survey of their follies and wickedness.

It is not intended, that sin is a pleasing subject of contemplation; but the grace of God is, by which the sinner is rescued. Say ye who know; is not the case somewhat like the one which shall now be put. I approach a precipice, and excited by some glittering bauble a little below me, venture down the dangerous steep, until my feet slip; and I hang by a single twig; unable to return; and likewise unable long to delay the fatal fall. While the rocks echo my cries of distress, and my heart palpitates with awful expectation, one comes to my help, whose character I have abused; and whose interest I have sought to destroy; and at the hazard of his own life, saves mine. Should I not always look back upon my folly, in attempting the descent; upon my consequent danger: and upon my unexpected preservation; deriving from the group of circumstances, unutterable satisfaction!

If then our sins will not be hidden from God; nor from ourselves; it must be from others, from our fellow men, that they will be concealed. While the sins of the impenitent world will be proclaimed, as by a trumpet pervading every part, and every crevice of the universe, the children of God will find their sins covered over, and not one of them mentioned to their disgrace.

From a view of this subject my fathers, and brethren, in the ministry, it appears, that he who desires the office of a bishop, desires a good work, and one very great, and important. Do sinners embrace a fatal error; are there sinners of this description among the people of our charge; may we be instrumental of converting them; in so doing, shall we save their souls from death; and hide the multitude of their sins? Then let us not sleep as do others. Does God inquire, whom shall we send, and who will go for us upon such an errand? Let us, each one, reply, Here am I; send me.

Such being the opening to us for usefulness, we ought to consider what method we can most successfully adopt. Our preaching; our prayers; and our practice; if right, will be mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. In our preaching even upon moral subjects, the things which we say, should be like the leaves of the tree of life. No other leaves are for the healing of the nations. Our people should see the leaves growing on the tree, or they should be told, they have been picked off from it.

To show sinners their condition, and what is absolutely necessary to their happiness; is a high duty which we have bound ourselves to perform. So long as our hearers are satisfied with their sinful courses, we should each one say I will weep in secret places for your pride. How uneasy should we be, until we had come to an explanation, if any of our people misunderstood us, in some important affair of a worldly nature? Shall we be less uneasy, if they hear us sabbath after sabbath, and still get no idea from us, that they must repent, and be converted? Shall we not labor to be more and more explicit?

In our prayers, public, and private, so far as we know the state of our people, should we not have their respective cases, as much as may be in our minds? When seasons appear unfavorable, should we not pray, that they may be saved from murmuring? When business of the world presses, should we not pray that it may not take off their attention from better things? When afflictions are sent, should we not pray, that they may get some good from them? When the sabbath comes, should we not pray, that they

may seek the house of God's worship; and if they go with carnal weapons, that the Captain of salvation would wrest them out of their hands? Should we not pray, that parents may teach their children the good way of the Lord; and that children may early sing the hosanna of the Son of David?

Our practice is as important, to say the least, as our preaching, and our prayers. Of this, whether with propriety or otherwise, every one will claim a right to judge. Passing over many things which might be mentioned here, I will just touch upon one particular, hoping that no minister is so negligent respecting it, as I am myself. What I have in view is the immediate intercourse, for which we have opportunity with our people. Do we know the joys, and the sorrows, of the brethren of our charge; or whether they have any of a religious nature? Do we put close questions to sinners, begging them to consider the thorny road which they are travelling, and the awful dungeon to which the devil is conducting them, bound with the chains of their own sins?

When Nathan went to David, and delivered the parable, he did much as a good minister does, when from the desk he preaches a serious, and close discourse. But how did David receive the parable? Just as our people receive our preaching. He did not suspect that it was intended for him; and the prophet would have gone away, having accomplished nothing, had he not said, Thou art the man.

My much respected christian brethren, our people are going, one after another into eternity every year, to thank God for services which we have rendered to them; or to enter their complaint against us, as unfaithful shepherds of the flock! Watchman what of the night; watchman what of the night! How goes on your own spiritual business; and how are our people? Do we live, because they stand fast in the Lord? Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love.

These associations which we hold among ourselves, let them be like the day of pentecost to the early disciples! Let us be with one accord in one place; beseeching our gracious Master to visit his garden; and to water every

plant! Let us entreat him to enable us to speak with such tongues as to be intelligible to all; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, may we be successful in persuading men!

Suffer me to propose for your consideration, whether it would not be expedient, in all instances in which we have neglected to call upon our people, for religious purposes; to make a humble confession to them, for neglect of duty; and now begin, in this private way, to beseech them to be reconciled to God. He that confesseth, and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy. But is this a hard, and self-denying work? I grant it. Yet has not our Lord enjoined it upon us to deny ourselves; and to take up the cross daily; assuring us, that unless we do this, we cannot be his disciples? In a business of this nature we may find more encouragement, and satisfaction, than in a view of it, we expect. If we have been faulty, confession must lighten the burden on our own hearts; and an approach, thus made to our people, may disarm them; and render them thoughtful; docile; pliable; and penitent. Whether I shall ever adopt this method or not, my own heart has often smitten me, that I have not done it from the beginning.

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SERMON XV.

CONCIO.

PHILIPPIANS i, 17.

Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

THE epistle in which these words are contained, was written from Rome where Paul was for a long time a prisoner.

He had good news to communicate to the brethren, as well as doctrine, and exhortation. It was natural for him to fear lest they should be concerned for his personal safety; and mourn for the glorious cause which they might think him no longer in a condition to advocate. For consolation he told them, that the things which had taken place respecting him, had fallen out rather unto the furtherance, than the hindrance of the gospel. His case had excited attention, and his sufferings had appeared to be the sufferings of an innocent man; his bonds the bonds of Christ, even in the palace, and in all other places through imperial Rome.

His imprisonment was attended with such blessed effects, that he could write, All the saints salute you; chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

Nor was this all. On account of Paul's confinement, many persons had become preachers. Some envying his gifts, and consequent reputation, undertook to supplant him by preaching themselves. But, instead of being grieved, he rejoiced; knowing that God could over-rule their designs, and turn those labors to good, which they performed from wicked selfish motives.

There were other persons however, who acted from different expectations and desires. Convinced, that Paul had

a divine commission, and seeing, that his preaching was limited to the house where he was a prisoner, they were stimulated to double their own exertions; and thus, when one laborer was hindered many came into his place to do his work. We have seen perhaps, something like this, when a whole neighborhood is rallied to take up the tools of husbandry, for a man who is poor or confined by sickness to his bed, and to do the business of many days in one.

Those who preached Christ at that time, and in those parts, with an honest intention, Paul says did it knowing, that he was set for the defence of the gospel; or of the word of God at large. Have we not the same station, my brethren, and fathers, and the same task with the Apostle; notwithstanding the inequality of our powers? Are we not expected to defend the gospel, by argument; by prayer; and by the whole glorious course of the christian life? If so, is it not a matter of consequence, that we should make, not a weak, but a manly, defence, in all these several ways? The words of my text the ministers of Christ may each one echo and apply to himself.

The present attempt is, not to instruct, but to stir up the pure minds of the well instructed, by way of remembrance.

First. It is our official duty to defend the gospel by argument. Paul reasoned We have rational faculties; and have a part to act towards rational creatures. If we recommend the gospel, the considerations which are weighty in our own minds, we shall set before others. We who make divinity our profession, do not believe without some reason. The scribes and pharisees sat in Moses' seat. In Christ's stead the ministers of religion beseech sinners to be reconciled to God.

Volume after volume having been written by the ablest hands, it cannot be expected, that this discourse will deserve even the character of a weak epitome of evidence. Such things however, as occur, so far as the occasion will allow, will be called into notice.

We may urge a belief of the gospel from the consideration, that in its essentials it is commensurate with every mind. It meets the most contracted capacity; it finds full employment for the most exalted. Like the widow's pot

of oil, it fills every vessel of every size. It is not thus with books of human origin. Those which are adapted to children, fail of instructing persons of riper years, and of extensive reading; and those in which men of science find satisfaction, are above the comprehension of the illiterate, whether young or old.

What book but the Bible, answers for the child at school; and for the man at the head of his family; for the peasant who drives his team, and the philosopher who searches into the wonders of nature? But even the children, who in the temple, sang hosanna, to the Son of David, and pious Simeon, what a difference was there in age; and between Paul, the pupil of Gamaliel, and the fishermen of Galilee to say nothing of natural strength of mind what a difference was there in advantages. These all however, probably understood the gospel; and like vessels of various sizes, they were each one full. Timothy knew the holy scriptures when he was a child; he made them the study of his life; and yet perhaps, the last chapter which he read convinced him, that there was there more to be learned than he thought the whole volume contained when he began to inquire into it.

This is a peculiarity of the gospel, as much distinguishing it from all other productions, as the human shape, and the human faculties, distinguish man from the numerous creatures with which the world abounds. That the gospel should be thus peculiar is essential to the end which it proposes. Were it constructed only for minds large by nature, and expanded by study, what benefit could it confer upon the vulgar? It would be like Saul's armor upon little David. Did it only suit the child, and the unlearned, what would become of men of superior intellectual stature? It would then be, like Joseph's coat of many colors, made for a child, and too small to cover the back of Goliath.

The grace of God which brings salvation, has appeared to all sorts, and sizes of men. Not many wise men after the flesh are called; yet some are; not many mighty are called, yet some are; not many noble are called, yet some are. In every country and in every age perhaps this is the case.

The reason why the wise men of the world are not universally on the Lord's side is, not, that the gospel has nothing for them to learn; but, that their pride makes them think themselves above the gospel. The different effects produced by human learning, and by religion, are strikingly painted by the apostle Paul, as his words stand in the original: Knowledge puffeth up; but love buildeth up. Here is a firm, compact edifice; and there is a soap bubble.

In defence of the gospel it is farther to be observed, that those who attack it, for want of other weapons, are obliged to resort to mockery, and low buffoonery; and, that more decent dissenters, choose to withdraw from the field of controversy, under the cover of some flimsy excuse. When in the midst of Mars' hill Paul argued strongly the christian cause before the enlightened people of Athens, how was he treated? Was he confronted with argument? Was the cause treated fairly; agitated fully; and finally rejected, on account of the feebleness of its support? Paul was heard until an opportunity was seized by some of the company to raise a laugh, and then he was dismissed. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. Some thought the resurrection impossible, and therefore mocked. But we have no record of any reason which they offered for their opinion. The presumption is strong, that they had none. Those who did not mock, told Paul they would hear him again. Why did he depart from among them, and not stay to give them farther opportunity? He knew there was no truth in what they said, and, that they told this story only out of regard to civility.

When our Lord Jesus performed astonishing miracles on persons possessed of the devil, what proof was offered against the reality of the miracles; or what similar miracles performed by men, were brought into view, to show, that those of Christ deserved no extraordinary attention? Thus runs the reasoning of the wise men of that day, with respect to this matter. He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. A man fights his own shadow; he pitches battle with himself. At the day of Pentecost, what strange scenes were exhibited? How were they

explained. These men are full of new wine. A fit of intoxication makes a person immediately fluent in many languages unknown before the fit comes on. A living unbeliever who monopolizes reason and who challenges even the Age of Reason for his legitimate child, thinks, that instead of cloven tongues, we should read, that a cloven foot appeared at the day of Pentecost.

Such weakness in objectors shows the strength of that against which the objections are brought. Infants of days, and little children are very much alike. The bullying boy knocks his fists together, and challenges the full grown man to combat; but is careful to keep at a well chosen distance that if pursued he may secure a retreat.

Since the reasoning of infidels is not to be found, we must examine that against which their mockery is brought, and see whether argument could find a place.

Our present narrow limits confine us to two great articles, those which concern the first and the second Adam; or the sinful condition of man and the gracious redemption by Christ. These are pillars upon which the whole building rests; and without which it must inevitably fall.

If man were not a fallen creature, there would not be such a similarity among men. Every age; every country, has much the same catalogue of crimes to present before us. Men are as nearly alike by nature inwardly as outwardly. If we find a creature which has not the general shapes, and proper ties of the human body, we may deny, that it belongs to the human species; and so, if there is any person who has not the common propensities of sinners, he will be a living witness against the fall. But such a person is no where to be found.

Bad education undoubtedly tends to bad morals but bad education will not account for the whole mass of evil with which society is contaminated. If pious parents never had profligate children, and if wicked parents never had pious children the scriptural doctrine concerning the origin of sin would not be overthrown. It would still be impossible to determine who began the bad education of children. If the effects were visible, the cause would be latent.

But who can believe says the scoffing infidel, that Adam by eating an apple, damned all his posterity? The fruit might be harmless, and the eating might be innocent; but the same cannot be said of the violation of a positive command. The sin therefore which was committed by eating the forbidden fruit, might wholly change, and ruin Adam's nature, though the fruit were such as we have and the eating a common operation.

Adam's personal damage may be more easily apprehended perhaps, than the consequences to his posterity. The difficulties however, in understanding the affair, should not be made stumbling blocks; for difficulties are to be met with in every thing. The child unborn is frequently marked by the apprehensions, or designs, of the mother, and bears the mark through life. I have myself seen, in a person not destitute of understanding neither, a plain resemblance to a swine; in the walk; the eyes; the sounds; and ordinary actions. We might all learn to stammer, so as to have no command of our tongues by imitating a stammerer. Who can account for either of these things? Were all the inexplicable matters witnessed by us all to be brought into notice, the rehearsal would be very long. If we will reject every thing which we cannot understand, the things which we shall retain will be few indeed.

Concerning Christ it may be said that he who denies him acts an unwise and inconsistent, part; concluding not only without, but against evidence. Four competent, and credible historians have given us a particular, though succinct account of his life. Is any thing concerning Alexander, better attested? If there was no such person as Jesus Christ, we have no reason to think there was ever such a person as Alexander. Our belief rests on testimony, and not on personal knowledge, in both these cases. How ridiculously should we appear in asserting, that one unit added to another, the sum is two here; and, that four units added together, the sum may be represented by a cypher there?

But leaving the historians we will pass to some facts which we know without them.

How came the first day of the week to be a sabbath? It is not the Jewish sabbath; nor is it derived from the economy of the heathen worship. Both Jews and Gentiles must be set aside, as having had no agency in the establishment of this day. The day is kept in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ. The first celebration therefore must have been attended from a thorough conviction, that Christ actually rose on that day. Think whether it would not be impossible to effect such a change now, and among us. With a loose unprincipled people, the sabbath may be voted out of the calendar, and its place supplied with a decade. But this is quite a different matter, originating not from a preference of days; but from an abhorrence of all days of divine rest.

Whence sprang the ordinance of baptism? The Jews ever have been strenuous for circumcision, and to the Gentiles, neither baptism, nor circumcision, had any meaning, or any use. Hence it appears, that baptism would have had insurmountable difficulties to encounter, had not those persons who were first baptized, been well assured that Christ in whose name, and on whose account, they received the ordinance, died, and rose, as the promised Messiah and put a new stamp on the seal of the righteousness of faith.

The prevalence of the christian religion is proof in favor of its Author. Do the Jews now make proselytes? Is not Judaism declining or certainly at least at a stand? How like the mustard-seed, to which it is fitly compared, has the religion of Christ grown large from the smallest beginnings; and expanded itself over many countries? Christ rides forth like a mighty conqueror, but he rides in a chariot paved with love. Mahomet spread his delusions far and wide; but the sword of his army was his irresistible argument. The success of Mahomet is nothing in his favor; for it can be accounted for on common principles. But every circumstance in human calculation, naturally tended to impede the progress of Christ.

Now, if histories; if facts, prove any thing; and in ordinary cases we receive the testimony, the proof is abundant for the religion of Christ, and there is none against it. The

mystery of his nature we must leave with other mysteries. Why inquirest thou after my name, seeing it is secret? God would be incomprehensible to us in any possible way of manifesting himself. Infinite unity puzzles and confounds as much as infinite trinity.

The benign effects produced by the gospel, we are likewise warranted to insist upon in its defence. Human learning and human laws effected the civilization of ancient Greece, and Rome; and what people were ever more civilized? What need then can there be of the gospel? Thus Infidelity delights to treat this subject. But much of the learning, and laws, of Greece, and Rome, was derived from inspiration, as the rivulet winds its course from the parent spring; and finds the distant cottager. Every one who has read Virgil's fourth Eclogue, has found Isaiah in it; and those who are conversant with the writings of Plato declare him to have had, in some way or other, assistance from the scriptures.

But setting these considerations aside, how inferior were Greece, and Rome, to countries where christianity is the nominal and existing religion? What advantage has christianity over polished heathenism as the knowledge of God is respected? What was known of God at Ephesus before christianity was there, may be learned from circumstances which attended an uproar occasioned by Paul's preaching. The charge alleged by Demetrius against Paul before the people was, that he had persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands. Is there more wisdom in the speech of the town clerk; or more evidence in it of the wisdom of the city? Hear and judge: Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how, that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Gods made with hands, and the image which fell down from Jupiter, were as deserving of the worship of rational creatures as Jupiter, the supreme god himself. Homer who gives us the mythology of Greece would be disposed to clothe his chief divinity in as venerable a character as the ideas of his age and country

would allow. But the altercations between the husband and the wife, in the lowest grade of society, and where there is no affection, and no decorum, hardly equal the quarrels of Jupiter and Juno, as they are given to us by Homer himself. Indeed crimes which would bring lasting infamy upon any man, were ascribed without hesitation to the heathen gods by their own worshippers. Instead of this ignorance of God, christianity furnishes correct ideas holding out a God, eternal, spiritual, immutable, a perfect pattern, and sustaining a character infinitely lovely, and infinitely awful.

Christianity equally excels heathenism in its influence on society. What we mean by virtue had no name among the most polished nations of the heathen world. But where things are, there are always names for them. The virtue of Greece, and Rome, was the courage of the gladiator; the virtue of the christian is the courage of him who fights the good fight and subdues himself. Here virtue shines the ornament of the human character, and works the good of mankind. There it glares the ferocity of savage nature, and exerts itself but to destroy. Revenge is heathenism; forgiveness is christianity. The religion of Christ has wrought great, and happy changes among nations. It must therefore be allowed to be a very powerful antidote.

But this religion, in this general view of it, must no more be estimated by the effects which a partial application has produced than the tendency of fire to warm and limber, the cold and benumbed body, should be estimated by the heat received from a single coal over which a man sits shivering. If christianity had its full operation; if its precepts were obeyed, what rulers would it make; what subjects; what ministers; what people; what husbands; what wives; what parents; what children; what neighbors; what friends of all? For every station in life Christ has given us rules of conduct; and they are perfect. All that is proper and desirable in life being inculcated by christianity, its value in society, if we would see the whole amount of it, should be rated by what an entire obedience to it would exhibit.

If christianity produces many beneficial effects in society; and might produce many more; and all in the highest degree; it follows necessarily, that man, in his individual ca-

capacity, is benefitted by it. When we indulge passion we are in danger of injuring others and we are sure of injuring ourselves. When we subdue it we prevent injury, to ourselves, and to others. The heathen, and the christian, as the present comforts, stand on very unequal ground; and the prospect of futurity is so different to the two, that the pen declines the task which the mind cannot imagine. Fruition of what is, and anticipation of what is to be, are the two supports upon which he who is enlightened from above, may lean and find himself at rest. Here the sorrows of life meet with their alleviation.

In defending the gospel we should sacrifice too much, if we neglected to add to the foregoing things the inherent quality which it contains to convince the mind of its truth, to show God in Christ.

The soul that sees him or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least, t' employ
More worthily, the powers she owned before.

How shall we know, that the doctrines of scripture are communications made from heaven, and deserving of our acceptance? Our Lord refers us, not so much to external testimony, as to the simple matter of obedience, or experience. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Arguments, however numerous, and strong, and from whatever quarter drawn, may leave us in unbelief unless we adopt the method here prescribed. Speculative belief, connected with the unbelief of the heart, is as much worse than thorough infidelity, as sins against light are worse than sins of ignorance. They deserve to be beaten with many stripes who know their Lord's will, and refuse to comply with it.

Religion, and consequently, revelation, is spoken of by its author not as a mathematical problem to be examined, and solved; but as a table to be approached; as an entertainment to be eaten. O taste and see, that the Lord is good! Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

In this view of religion let us see what must be the readiest way to be satisfied about it.

We will suppose a man now brought into the world, and set before us, with powers of body, and faculties of mind, as complete as we possess; feeling uneasiness from hunger, but knowing nothing of food, and having no instructive inclinations to it. Pitying his situation, as we naturally should, how should we proceed with him. Should we reason with him, descanting upon the properties of bread, and telling him of the structure of his own body? Should we inform him, that his teeth would grind the food; that his stomach would digest it; that the requisite nutriment would be carried in proper vessels, to every member, and through every part of him, and that whatever might be useless, would not remain as a load, but be removed by perspiration, and otherwise as the case might require? Anatomical lectures, and lectures on grain, would be foreign from our thoughts, and of no service to the suffering man. We should rather say; Here, eat; and if we could not make him understand this, we should by signs invite him, or by force constrain him, to eat; knowing, that he would understand far more of the value of bread from eating it, than from any reasoning about it.

God, if I mistake not deals with us in this manner, and we shall never know how gracious he is, unless we sit down at his table and partake of the feast which he has prepared for the soul.

Arguing in defence of the gospel, we shall, by no means, pass by miracles, and prophecies; the confessions of wicked men; and the testimony of devils. But, to descant upon these things now, the time forbids me. We are it was observed to defend the gospel by argument. But, like the merchant, we may show samples of our goods; and bring out, as occasion requires.

Secondly. Those who defend the gospel have much occasion for the aid of prayer, or to vary the expression, without altering the meaning, have much occasion for the help of heaven. Who is sufficient for these things! Strengthened by Christ, we may maintain the cause; but combatting in our own strength we shall certainly be put to flight.

Paul was so sensible of the benefits resulting from prayer, that he was not satisfied with praying himself, but enjoined it upon his brethren to pray for him. If the inspired apostle could not officiate in his ministerial character to advantage, without prayer, the necessities of our own case must be obvious.

The difficulties of every profession are best known to the persons who are engaged in it; and this observation applies, with special force, to the ministry. People in general think it an easy matter to preach; and account the whole life of a minister rather pastime, than labor. But I think myself happy brethren, and fathers, because I shall answer for myself this day, before you, touching all the things whereof we are accused of the world. My appeal will be to your own experience, concerning the use and necessity of prayer, in defending the gospel.

The Bible offers almost innumerable, and quite inexhaustible, themes, for meditation. But what minister has not read for days, and that repeatedly, in the course of his life, without being able to find a text, being thus like a person starving at a table plentifully spread. The prayer of every private christian, and more especially of every minister, for himself, should be Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law! A passage may be read a thousand times, and appear to be no foundation for a discourse, which is like the horn of plenty, and will so be viewed by us, when in a favorable mood.

It is no uncommon thing for us to ask each other for a text. How much better should we do to apply to God? Indeed, on all occasions, direction in this affair, should be sought. Is this superstition? Does not he who oversees a company of laborers, and gives them instruction about their work, first consult the higher authority under which he himself acts? If this is proper, and the practice among men in ordinary matters, it surely should be our practice in things of so much higher concern.

The whole volume of scripture is good but some particular scriptures are better adapted to the audience, or to individuals, at some times, than at others. God knows how our people feel, and what will strike them most forcibly,

and most profitably; and who can think, that he will not grant his guidance to us, if we ask the blessing of him? He who bestows all good things liberally, and without upbraiding, will have no inclination to withhold help in a case of this kind.

Another thing to be prayed for is composure of mind. We shall make a poor defence without this. It is needful, that we wait on the Lord without distraction. We live in the midst of so much confusion, and have such jarring elements in our own sinful nature, that the voice, peace; be still; is as necessary to our progress, as it was to the safety of the disciples, when the storm came down upon the lake, and opened every where, a watery grave. Our services will be animated, or dull; easy, and pleasurable, or fatiguing, and disagreeable; according to the state of our hearts. This is the thermometer, marking the degrees of heat and cold within us.

To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded, is life, and peace. Carry the world's pleasure or troubles into the desk, and preaching will be like an attempt to kindle a fire by throwing on water. The earth was made to tread upon. When we keep it under our feet, we breathe in the atmosphere of heaven, and act the part of good soldiers of Jesus Christ. James, and John, never would have been styled Boanerges, had they persisted in wishing to sit, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, of their master, in an earthly kingdom. When they requested these dignities, the tide of religion was at low ebb in their souls, and they would have preached but poorly, if they had undertaken. The temper of Paul seen in the following words, is truly enviable, and we should ever pray for it. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Such elevation of soul makes the duties of the ministry easy, and it cannot be except where there is great composure of mind.

In defending the gospel, prayer is to be resorted to farther, with a view of collecting people to hear. The greater the assembly, the more numerous are the witnesses to the

defence which we make. Multitudes of persons within the christian world are to be found who are not observers of the sabbath; and we have some in all our societies. How many more there would be among us, should we neglect prayer, we cannot tell, nor would it be expedient for us to make the trial. To God it belongs to incline persons to the house of his worship. External worship does not answer the divine law. But he who is outwardly wrong, cannot be inwardly right. There may be a deadly malady preying invisibly, on the sick; but so long as the symptoms of it are not discovered, there is encouragement for the physician and for the friends. Since it is to be expected that the great adversary at all times when he can will have his subaltern agents, it will be our duty to pray, that they may not succeed in drawing others into their pernicious ways. Ahithophel's counsel was overthrown; and we should labor to have the counsel of all wicked men terminate in the same manner.

If prayer is of use on the several accounts already mentioned we should likewise pray to God, to prepare the hearts of men, of every description, and every where, to receive the gospel. An enemy covered all over with brass repels the weapons of the assailant. So it is in the spiritual warfare. The soldiers of Christ find the foe lurking, and laughing, within the thick defence of iniquity; and however valiant and faithful, they may be, they can touch no vulnerable part without divine assistance.

After the most serious labors of the pulpit how often do we have occasion before we leave the house to sigh, and complain, inwardly of our people, that the show of their countenance witnesses against them. As Swift observed, that his female friends, sitting at the card table, and discoursing of his death, would say, 'The Dean is dead, pray what is trumps?' so we all find serious things, and trifles mingled together; the death of Christ thrust out of the mind by the gewgaws of the world. When our preaching is received, not as the word of man but as the word of the living God, we have reason to rejoice, because our labor will not be in vain.

Though censure may be less agreeable than commendation, yet if we are sincerely anxious for the good of souls, it will pain us to hear ourselves commended, and God not glorified. He must be a hireling indeed who can be contented with a people, barely because they are contented, or even pleased with him.

Thirdly. Those who act in defence of the gospel have something to attend to beside argument and prayer; something, without which, argument and prayer, will be of no avail. The life which we lead will be more regarded than the reasoning which we use; than the prayers which we utter. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no strange thing, if his ministers also, be transformed as the ministers of righteousness. The prayer of the righteous man availeth much. The argument of the righteous man, in the cause of righteousness is weighty.

If our hearers are at a loss to know whether we believe as we preach, they appeal to our lives. Enoch, walking with God, convinces, and persuades, by his very walk. As it will not do to say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; so neither will it do to say, Thou hast works, and I have faith. The principle, and the life, must go together. Honesty, and humanity, must be engraved upon the palms of our hands; sobriety, and contentment, must be frontlets between our eyes. General duties will be looked for from us; and duties which are more particular.

We shall bring reproach upon the cause of Christ, instead of defending the gospel, unless we unite as a band of brothers, in the great work we have undertaken. Differences among christians are so many stumbling blocks in the way of men, and differences among ministers are worse than among private christians. If one minister drops a word disrespectfully, and sneeringly, of another, it is eagerly seized and tends to detriment.

Levi, with great propriety, tells Priestly, that christians should be agreed among themselves, before they attempt to proselyte the Jews. The disciples did not like him who cast out devils, even in the name of Christ, because he followed not them. But surely, the reply of our Lord was calculated to silence them, and should be sufficient for us.

in a case of the like kind. Christians may hold to close communion, and exclude from their sacramental table all those who think they may be buried with Christ in baptism without being baptised by immersion. But do we suppose, that Christ has no followers but such as are contained in a church thus founded? While we see, and mourn over the error of a church which denies fellowship to us; we should be careful not to draw the lines unreasonably tight among ourselves. We should not slay at the passages of Jordan our fellow creatures and our fellow laborers merely because they cannot pronounce Shibboleth. Let us say with the Apostle, Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Far be it from any of us to plead for licentiousness; or to wish charity so far to extend her arms as to embrace damnable heresies. But the more we can simplify religion without sacrificing any of its essentials the more we shall cultivate harmony of feeling among ourselves, and the more evidence shall we give to others, that we are tenacious of no traditions of men, but are contented with the simplicity of the gospel.

Could I stand by Dr. Watts at the present moment, I doubt not, that I should hear him speak of the wonders of that love,
Which Gabriel plays on every chord.

How happy must he have felt when he wrote his Orthodoxy and Charity! How happy must every minister of Christ have been in his company; and how terrible to sinners would a band of such soldiers appear, armed with the two edged sword of the Spirit!

As our conduct towards each other is important, so our treatment of the church will be regarded, and will prove for, or against us. If we insist upon lording it over God's heritage, we shall resemble the Pope; and be as unpromising defenders of the gospel as he. Should we practise in this way, it will ever be running in the mind of the brethren to whom we are overseers, Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

It should always be evident that we act from conscience, and not from obstinacy. It should always be recollected, that our Lord, and Master, washed his disciples feet, and

left it in charge, that his disciples, throughout all generations should wash one another's feet.

But while we consider ourselves as fallible men, and act no assuming part towards the Church we should be resolute to withstand any brother to the face, if he is evidently to be blamed, and it is our province to deal with him. The church is viewed by many like the Mason's Lodge; a combination to cover wickedness. If discipline is wholly neglected; or offences are so palliated, and settled, that the offence will show itself in full size, while the repentance is invisible even to those who would be glad to discover it, the charge of hypocrisy may well be brought forward, and supported.

The conduct of all mankind should be fair, and open to inspection; and especially, is this looked for from professors of religion; and above all from ministers of the gospel. We can never satisfy such as require perfection in christians. The present state of man is imperfect. But we are bound to show to the world that christians, instead of vindicating their conduct, when it is manifestly wrong, are willing, and desirous, to confess their faults, and to ask forgiveness.

Ministers have many, and strong, temptations, to undue lenity, in the oversight of their brethren; but they should have more, and stronger, inducements, to act up to the rules of their office. Whenever we can please men, and please God, at the same time, we should do it. But sometimes this is impracticable; and when this is the case there can be no hesitation concerning what is duty.

If we would defend the gospel to the best effect we must demean ourselves in our families according to its dictates. Family order is so important, that Paul sets down the want of it, as a disqualification for the ministry. Our own walls present the most opportune sphere for christian labor. Every man has special advantages with his own household, on account of the peculiar influence of this his station. If we beseech our people from the desk, to be reconciled to God, and say nothing upon the subject, within the narrower circle of our work, and to those whose connexion with us invites to uncommon assiduity; we shall act as unwisely as we should, if neglecting our own concerns of a secular na-

ture, we devoted our time to the management of our neighbor's business.

Those who enjoy religion themselves, want, that all should enjoy it; and feel the most anxious for those with whom they are the most intimately connected.

Many professing christians attend to religious reading in their families, and to prayer, not steadily, but as their worldly concerns will allow. It is to be presumed, that ministers are not found in this class. The physician calls the man sick, whose pulse is now quick; now slow; and now insensible.

Whatever truth this discourse contains will be acceptable to the lovers of truth; and whatever errors it embraces will be detected, and discarded.

We are set for the defence of the gospel. If we know the things which belong to this defence, happy are we if we do them! I think my friends in the ministry, I may recommend to you the things which have been suggested, though my house be not so with God.

SERMON XVI.

**A SERMON PREACHED AT PERU, AT THE
ORDINATION OF THE REV. JOSEPH
M. BREWSTER, DEC. 29th, 1824.**

JOHN vii, 18.

He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

IN the beginning of this chapter we are informed, that Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Though he spent the latter part of his life, principally, in Galilee, he attended the appointed feasts at Jerusalem; and the text is part of a conversation which he had with the Jews at the feast of tabernacles. This feast lasted eight days.

His brethren insiduously proposed to him to go into Judea when the time for the feast was approaching; but he had a good reason for refusing to comply with their proposal; and when he did go, he went secretly. About the midst of the feast, or when the time for its celebration was about half elapsed, he appeared openly in the temple, and took his place as a teacher.

Such was the instruction which he communicated, and such was his manner of communication, that the Jews, who knew him only as a man, marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? To this inquiry

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.

This answer may be put into the following short paraphrase. You think it wonderful, that I should be able to teach, who have never been instructed myself; but it is because you consider me merely as a man; and the doctrine which I deliver to you is from God; and therefore, as a man, it is not mine. If you would have this affair made intelligible to you, you must do the will of God, for there is no other way in which you can understand it.

The text follows; and it contains a general rule by which the character of a religious instructor may be determined. Had the Jews formed their judgment of Christ by this rule, they must have known, that he was the Messiah. Their error was the error of the wicked. Let us not copy after it. We are gathered together at this time, to set apart one as a minister of the gospel in this place; and it is infinitely important, that he should be a suitable person. The passage of scripture selected as the theme of discourse upon the present occasion, calls for our consideration in the several particulars which it contains.

First. It is important for us to understand the character of the person who speaketh of himself. We shall discover the meaning of this passage, if we compare it with some other passages in which a similar phraseology is employed. When Christ informed his disciples that he would send the Spirit of truth to be their comforter, after his departure, he told them He will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. We should put a wrong construction upon this passage were we to conclude, that the Spirit is a limited and dependant being, for the meaning is obviously this, that the persons of the Godhead, in their mysterious mode of existence, can make no separate communication. The following passage, respecting the Son, may be placed by the side of this, as exactly parallel; and it is to be interpreted in the same way. Verily verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself. All power belongs to the

Son, but he can do nothing of himself, because whatever he does, is done by the Godhead. The reason therefore why what the Spirit speaks he does not speak of himself; and why what the Son does, he does not do of himself, is this, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, speak, and act, together, as one God.

When Christ sent out his apostles he directed them to take no thought, how, or what, they should speak, and added as a reason for this direction, For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Their case was a peculiar one, for they were to be inspired, and in this way furnished with what might be necessary to be said, upon any occasion, so that indeed it was not they that spoke, but the Spirit himself.

When Caiaphas prophesied, that Jesus should die for that nation and not for that nation only, but, that also he should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, it is said, And this spake he not of himself. The words which he used were his own; and he had his own meaning in uttering them; but it was the Spirit who turned what he said into an important prophecy, and therefore, he did not speak of himself. He had no knowledge of what was to take place, nor had he any desire, that such should be the consequences of that death which he pronounced to be expedient. What he spoke of himself was iniquitous indeed; for this appears to be what he intended, that whether guilty, or innocent, Jesus ought to be put to death, lest, in consequence of the spread of his religion, the nation of the Jews should be destroyed by the Romans. It is evident that his meaning was understood by the Council, though he was overruled and directed in communicating it.

He who speaks of himself to give a definition of the phrase, speaks without any assistance, or direction, from God. Caiaphas was not assisted, but he was directed; otherwise he would have spoken of himself, in this case, as he did at other times. We are not to suppose that he who speaks of himself is essentially different in moral character from Caiaphas notwithstanding in this instance, he was employed as an organ of communication, upon an interesting subject.

Though he made use of a different mode of expression, our Savior, undoubtedly, had reference to the same character that St. Paul describes in what he says of the natural man. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. Should the natural man then undertake to speak of the things of the Spirit of God, having no knowledge of them, must he not speak of himself.

In one thing all natural men are alike; but in every thing but one, there is a great difference.

There is a difference in mental capacity, in information, and in disposition. Minds, as well as bodies, are of various sizes, and have various powers. There are dwarfs in intellect; and there are giants; and there are others to fill up all the space between the two extremes. This difference is as manifest as the difference in soils; in animals; in trees, and in stones.

No less is the difference between one man and another with regard to the exercise of those powers which belong to the mind; and the acquisition of that knowledge which is attainable by assiduous application. Some minds are like the fallow ground, which bears nothing, because it has not been broken up; while others resemble the garden which is very productive, because much attention is paid to it. There is not only this difference between men with respect to the knowledge of things in general, but some who have been much conversant with other books, have never made the Bible at all their study; while others have read it so much, that they are able to repeat almost any passage. The pharisees paid much attention to the law, and wrote portions of it upon their broad phylacteries.

To these things it may be added, that men are by nature possessed of different dispositions; for some are morose, and contentious, and others are mild, and amiable. It is abundantly evident, that the young lawyer who went to inquire what he must do that he might have eternal life, was a natural man; or an unrenewed sinner: but it is said concerning him, that Jesus beholding him loved him. He could not however love him as one of his disciples, for such he was not, because he preferred his worldly substance to a

treasure in heaven. There are probably many such men in the world, who are thought to be distinguished for piety, but surely, this must be a very incorrect judgment concerning their character, if we are to take our ideas of piety from the scriptures.

It appears then, that a man may be possessed of powerful intellectual faculties; be extensively acquainted with things in general; have much speculative knowledge of the Bible; and be very winning in his address; and yet be in a state of nature; and speak altogether, of himself.

Secondly. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory. All men are actuated by motives, and these motives are such as comport with their character. The man who speaks of himself can have no motives to govern his conduct, but such as are selfish. Different objects may be sought after by men actuated by natural motives, according to the different views, which they entertain of the importance of things; but every such man must have an exclusive regard to what he considers his own benefit.

If any undertake to preach the gospel who are not properly qualified, and we have reason to fear there are many of this description, we may suppose, that some preach for filthy lucre's sake, and, that in the choice of a place to establish themselves, they have a primary regard to the compensation which they shall receive for their services. Like commodities that are sold by the auctioneer, such men will go off to the highest bidder.

In this uncharitable, and unserious world, it is doubtless, the opinion of not a few, that all who pass for ministers of the gospel are alike in this particular and, that any one might be bought, if the pecuniary inducement should be judged to be sufficient. If there were no facts to contradict this opinion, we should be obliged to admit it as correct. For the present we say, let those entertain it, who can find any satisfaction arising from it.

It seems to be the opinion of many, that every minister is a hireling who has any stipulated compensation. But is this opinion founded on reason, or scripture? Is a man, because he is a minister, entitled to nothing which he can depend upon as a remuneration for what he has expended in

his education, and for all the labors of his life after he enters into the ministry. Has any one such an idea of the reason of things, as to think this to be reasonable?

If we judge of this matter by the standard of the scriptures, how shall we decide it? Under the legal dispensation provision was made for the priesthood by a special appointment of heaven; and that provision was not scanty. The tribe of Levi had forty eight cities, with their suburbs; and in addition to this a tithe, or tenth, of all the increase of the property belonging to the other tribes, so far as the productions of the soil were concerned. The priests who belonged to this tribe, had a tenth of what was allotted as the portion of the tribe.

Has that change from the legal to the christian dispensation so altered the nature of things, that the ministers of the gospel must be incumbents on the charity of their people? Is any one better qualified to decide this question than St. Paul? Hear then what he has said about it, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. Without citing any thing farther, this passage is sufficient to show, that the ministers of the gospel have a claim, differing circumstantially, but founded on the same authority with that of the Jewish priesthood. Though the scriptures are silent as to any specific appropriation for the ministers of the gospel, it is fair to infer from the order which respected the ancient priesthood, that they are entitled to a comfortable, and honorable support.

Where this can be obtained, it ought to be satisfactory, and he who would refuse an offer of what would be adequate to the supply of all his real wants, for the sake of more, either, that he might hoard it up, or expend it in the luxuries of life, must have a mercenary mind; and aim at no higher object than what, from mistaken views, he considers his own glory.

Others, prompted by ambition seek their own glory by making a display of their talents, and are never satisfied unless they can attract the attention of the people to themselves, and never dissatisfied when this is accomplished. The majority perhaps, of those to whom the gospel is preached, judge of what they hear as they

would of a theatrical exhibition, regarding only the speaker, and the composition. The orator therefore and the fine writer, who lays out all his ingenuity, in the discussion of his subject, however superficially he may present it; and who rounds, and polishes, his periods until they become musical, will gather a crowd and excite admiration. Of course, we may conclude, that he who seeks his own glory, in popularity, will be very studious, about the selection, and collocation of words; and about his own attitudes, and gestures, in delivering his discourses.

Let it not be supposed, that I am an advocate for obsolete, and outlandish, phraseology; nor that I think a minister, to appear in character, should be dull in his manner of speaking, and vapid, in his composition. In the book of Ecclesiastes it is said, The preacher sought to find out acceptable words. Apollos, likewise, was an eloquent man, and Paul, when he stood before Agrippa, and answered for himself, to make what he said the more impressive, did probably, as he commonly did, Stretched out his hand.

Some attention ought to be paid to language, and to delivery; neither is it required of us, that we be altogether indifferent, how our services are regarded. We may go safely as far as St. Paul went, unless we can detect him in a mistake, and he said to the Corinthians, I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you, for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

We shall easily discover however, that the apostle said not this from vanity, if we compare this passage with one in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, For this cause also, thank we God, without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. Had he sought his own glory, it would have been very mortifying to him to have been so little thought of as a man, in consequence of the attention which was paid to the authority under which he acted as an ambassador.

Others who seek their own glory, labor to establish such an ascendancy over their people, that they may be able to

dictate to them, as to every article both of faith, and practice; and that without any regard to any standard by which the subject might be tried. I would not be understood to assert, that such an extreme case, popery excepted, has ever had an existence; but it is, at least, a supposable case, and therefore, proper to be noticed. St. Peter seems to have anticipated some clerical abuse of this kind, when in his exhortation to the elders he cautioned them, not to be lords over God's heritage.

There is however something in the ministerial office, which gives to those to whom it belongs, an elevation above the generality of christians, with regard to the things which relate to their calling. Take a quotation from St. Paul's first epistle to Timothy, Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor; especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses. Here is the scriptural authority by which the conduct of ministers, and people, should be governed, so far as this matter is concerned.

It appears from what has been said, that he who speaks of himself, will invariably have his own glory for his object, in whatever particular way he may endeavor to accomplish it.

Thirdly. We are led by our subject to inquire upon what evidence our judgment should be founded, that we are sent of God to preach the gospel. This is a matter which will bear examination as well as any other; and certainly, there is no one more interesting for us to examine.

As he who speaks of himself, or the natural, unrenewed, unsanctified man, cannot be sent, it is first of all important, and absolutely necessary, before we enter upon the business of the ministry, that we should be satisfied with respect to a work of regeneration upon our hearts. Time, place, and all the circumstances, if they can be ascertained, will be interesting to be brought into view; but other evidence will be sufficient without these things; and these things without other evidence, might lead us to an incorrect decision.

Dost thou believe on the Son of God, was the question of our Savior to the man who was born blind, and upon

whom he bestowed the blessing of sight, and this is the substance of what the apostles said to those whom they baptized, and admitted to the privileges of the church. This is a great question to be considered; and there is but one way in which it can satisfactorily, be answered. St. John has informed us, and his authority is infallible, that He who believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. To determine therefore, whether we belong to the household of God, we are to examine the state of our minds, and the exercises of our hearts. Let us take up this subject then briefly in its several particulars, bringing into view such passages of scripture as are pertinent to this examination.

The carnal mind is enmity against God. If we find that our minds are enmity against God, we may be sure, that they are carnal; and if on the contrary, we find that we love God above every other object of affection, the conclusion will be well founded, that we are his children. It is too plain to require an argument to prove it, that God in his true character, instead of being an object of pleasing contemplation to the unregenerate sinner, never fails of being, when he is thought of, the occasion of opposition and disgust.

It is to be feared that this assembly is made up in part, of persons of this description. To such persons then, let my appeal be, and let me ask them, whether such feelings of enmity, as have been described, are not now, the feelings of their hearts awakened by the bare mention of the name of God? Is not the contrast so great between enmity and love, that every one who has experienced them both, will be able to judge of the difference? If we are reconciled, God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

We will leave this article to attend to another, which respects the Son of God. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. We are led by this passage to inquire what we think of the doctrine of the cross; or of the atonement of Christ. If it appears to us inconsistent, and absurd, this must be the reason, that we are in a state of ignorance; and alienation and dying in such a state, must

inevitably perish. The feelings of natural men, with respect to this affair, are essentially, alike. Much as the philosopher may differ in other things from the peasant, or the moralist from the profligate, they agree in this. Now, if I find an entire revolution in my feelings upon this point, and I can say, adopting the language of the apostle, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; how shall I account for it, except by supposing, that a radical change has been effected in my heart?

We pass to a third particular, which relates to our manner of life. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. We may go on adding iniquity to sin, and have much of that sorrow of the world which Esau had, and Judas, who repented of the consequences of their conduct; and what can be the end of such a life, but destruction? Is there not a vast, and manifest, difference, between sorrow of this kind, and that repentance which is sorrow for sin, considered as an evil; and the most dreadful evil, in itself? If I can trace my sufferings to sin as the cause which procures them; and hate the sin, while I am patient under the sufferings consequent upon it, have I not reason to hope that God has granted me repentance unto life?

A fourth particular shall conclude the enumeration. We know, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Those who are indeed the brethren of Christ ought to be loved by all mankind, because, whoever they are, they are the excellent of the earth. But do we not learn from the highest authority, that the world hates them, for this very reason? If then, we can satisfy ourselves, that we love any persons, merely because they are brethren, because they love God, and God loves them, this will be a testimony of no common importance, that we have begun to live by faith.

Every christian is presented with the evidence which has now been adduced; but it, by no means, follows, that it is the duty of every christian to become a public teacher. Before any one can conclude consistently, that he ought to act in this capacity, he must be satisfied, that he possesses other qualifications.

He must be so well acquainted with things in general, that his people will not despise him for his ignorance; and especially, must he be so well versed in the scriptures, that he can defend the doctrines which they contain; and convince, or confute, gainsayers.

The Bible which we have, being a translation, it would be well for every public teacher to be acquainted with the languages in which it was originally written. By many, I know, it is thought indispensable, that every minister should have a critical knowledge of both Greek, and Hebrew. This is not my own opinion, and my reasons are submitted for consideration.

The translation which we possess, has stood the test of many generations; and however it might be amended in some particulars, it has never yet been thought by the christian world, expedient to set it aside, and provide a substitute for it. We may therefore conclude, that the best qualified judges have put their sanction upon it; and, that if we conform to it in our preaching, we shall not fall into any dangerous mistake.

It will be remembered too, that learned commentators have noticed the passages which they supposed incorrectly translated, and have given us their own ideas of their meaning. We may avail ourselves of the result of their inquiries.

It may be added, that some of the most distinguished divines, and some who have presided, with great dignity, in colleges, have had but a very superficial acquaintance, if any at all, with the Hebrew language.

Farther, since there are so many societies destitute of religious ministerial instruction, as the case is at present, when would they be supplied, if those only were to be admitted to the ministry in future, who could themselves, detect, and correct, every mistake to be found in our translation of the Bible; and if those ministers should be deprived of their office who were not able to come up to this standard?

Finally if we were ever so competent to criticise upon the translation which we have, and to substitute alterations where they would be proper, it would be quite inexpedient

for us to do it, very frequently, in our preaching, for no method could be adopted which would tend more effectually to unsettle the minds of our people, with respect to the scriptures, as a system of truth.

The intention of these observations is, by no means, to encourage indolence, and ignorance. Knowledge in every thing, is making progress, and we ought to rejoice in the prospect, that the ministry will become more, and more learned, and respectable.

But one more qualification of a minister will be mentioned at this time, or one more evidence which we ought to look for, that we are sent of God to preach the gospel. This a true saying, If a man desire! the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. One part of this passage will explain the other. He who desires the office of a bishop, is the one who desires the work of a bishop. It will be understood, that bishop in the scriptural use of the term, is but another name for one whom we ordinarily call a minister; and therefore, what is here said respects the personal concern of every minister. If we do not enter into the ministry because the service, with all the difficulties, and discouragements, attending it, is more agreeable to us than any other employment, we undertake that for which we have no qualification.

Fourthly. If we are sent of God to preach the gospel, what shall we consider his glory to consist in, when we are seeking it, in the performance of our work?

A hireling minister might think he was doing much, if he did nothing more than refine the manners of his people, by introducing among them customs, and fashions, such as are to be found in a more advanced state of society. The exterior appearance of a place, and of a people, may often be improved; but surely, this is an object of small comparative importance, and a minister should never forget, that it would be desirable, or otherwise, according to the moral effect which might be produced by it.

It is suitable that a minister should be engaged in any thing, which can be viewed as connected with the glory of God; and by this, his conduct ought altogether to be governed. God is infinite, and therefore, we cannot increase,

nor diminish, his glory. Of course, all that we can intend by seeking the glory of God, is endeavoring, that there may be a farther manifestation of it. The glory of God is manifested in any place, exactly in proportion to the religion of that place; and there are just as many persons to witness this glory, as there are subjects of the grace which opens their eyes upon the object.

For this reason that minister who seeks the glory of God, will desire, and endeavor, to promote religion, sensible, that there is no other way in which he can accomplish his purpose. The majority of the people, in almost every place, is made up of those who make no profession of religion. If they actually have no religion, the work is to be begun with them; and if they can be brought to the exercise of faith, and repentance, God will be glorified in this important change effected in their condition. This change is brought about by God; but ordinarily by the instrumentality of his ministers.

There may be religion in the heart, when there is a great want of information respecting the doctrines, and the duties, of it. As Peter sought the glory of God in instructing Cornelius, and Aquila, and Priscilla, in expounding to Apollos that way, more perfectly, which he had begun to understand, so every minister who is faithful, will consider himself as having a part to perform, in leading on new converts and communicating to them knowledge, as their case may require.

It is manifest from the establishment, and preservation, of a church in the world, that it is the will of God that his people should appear as public witnesses for the truth; and embody themselves that they may be known. In his sermon on the mount Christ said to his disciples, Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid: Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. The manifold wisdom of God is made known by the church to principalities, and powers, in heavenly places. If there were no church in the world, how different would be the state of things? Those ought not to unite with the church, who have not united with

Christ; but every one of his disciples, should be told of the importance of confessing him before men.

God is glorified, or his glory is displayed, when his church is in a condition of good order, and it is incumbent upon every minister to attend to this business. It is no uncommon thing for those who meet at the same sacramental table, to be of various religious opinions, some sound in the faith, and others very unsound, and heretical.

I know there are not wanting advocates for the opinion, that this is an affair of no great importance; and, that no measures ought to be taken to make the state of things otherwise. If such an opinion be founded upon the parable of the tares, it must be owing to a misconstruction of the meaning of that parable; for other scriptures are very explicit upon this point. Every one who adopts this opinion should be able to answer this question, How can two walk together except they be agreed?

A man that is an heretic after the first and second, admonition, is to be rejected. Heresies are coupled with idolatry, seditions, and other works of the flesh; and, that they are evil in the extreme, is evident from this, that they are called damnable. A denial of the Lord Jesus Christ is what St. Peter particularly mentions; and this he speaks of in the plural, denominating it heresies, because it is a combination of falsehoods. Heretics are never harmless members of a church, for it is said, that many will follow their pernicious ways; and that their word will eat as doth a canker.

There are also, not unfrequently bickerings, and contentions in a church. Such things are in direct violation of duty, and of all covenant obligation; and productive of the most unfavorable effects, in general, and particularly, upon those who are without, and who are busily employed in attending to the conduct of the professors of religion.

Such things will not much disturb him who is seeking his own glory, unless some damage is likely to accrue to him personally; but the minister who makes the glory of God his principal object, will weep between the porch and the altar and say, Spare thy people O Lord! and give not thy heritage to reproach!

If we must tell the whole truth about those who profess religion, we must say, that some of them, we know not how many, are very delinquent with respect to public worship; and omit; either altogether, or in a great degree, the morning and evening sacrifice, in their own houses. The consequence is what might be looked for, for they forsake the company of sober, and regular christians; and frequent places of public resort, where there is drinking; and swearing; and lying; and cheating; and where, from the temptation, they fall into the practice of drinking, and swearing, and lying, and cheating; themselves.

These evils, and all others, which, at any time, have an existence in a church, must be very grievous to every minister who seeks the glory of God; and he will study, and endeavor, to prevent, or correct them.

Fifthly. We come, in the last place, to consider what measures will be adopted by the minister, who seeks the glory of God, to accomplish his purpose.

Among other things he will preach the gospel; and be very careful, not to substitute any thing for that which may be strictly called the gospel of Christ, however clamorous any of his people may be for a greater variety in his discourses, and for something more entertaining. Our Saviour has told us, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. If this is the whole work, there is nothing else to be done. If we consult the writings of St. Paul, we shall find how tenacious he was with respect to this matter. To the Corinthians he says, For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; But we preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. With him all the other apostles are perfectly agreed.

This was the doctrine preached at the day of pentecost, when such wonderful effects were produced, and about three thousand souls were gathered into the church. Though the cry has ever been for something more plain, and intelligible, it is presumed, that where the preaching has been any thing but the cross of Christ, not one solitary instance can be mentioned, of what deserves to be called a reformation, effected by it, among a people, or in a case of

an individual. To this doctrine we may trace all the revivals of religion which have been known in every age, and in every country, from the earliest period down to the present time.

St. Paul in his preaching had regard to the state of the people, and, to use his own language, he fed them with milk, or with meat, according as he found the one, or the other, most suitable, but he never failed to tell any, to whom he addressed himself, of their lost estate, as sinners, and of their absolute necessity of an interest in the atonement of Christ. As the carnality of the Corinthian church made it expedient for him in his labors among them, to confine himself to the rudiments of religion, while he dealt out what he calls hidden wisdom among those who were perfect, or more advanced in knowledge, and experience, ministers would do well to follow his example, and bring nothing before their people, collectively, which is hard to be understood, unless it be that mystery of godliness, which is essential to their salvation.

A minister is not only a teacher to instruct his people; but a shepherd to take care of them. Though what relates to this office has been in part already noticed, it is of sufficient importance to be still farther considered. We have not been much acquainted with pastoral life, but it must be obvious to us all, that when a flock is under the care of a shepherd, it is necessary that the shepherd should be much with the flock. If a minister is connected with his people, as a shepherd is with his flock, then it is of consequence, that he should observe the conduct of the shepherd, and endeavor to conform to it.

This is a part of the business of a minister which is generally neglected, and by no one, perhaps, more than by the person who is now speaking about it; yet at the hazard of being condemned out of his own mouth, he will offer some reasons to show how important it is for a minister to visit his people.—

In the twenty third chapter of Jeremiah we read, Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them. In the eleventh

chapter of Zechariah, where judgments are predicted, the Lord says, For lo I will raise up a shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off; neither shall seek the young one; nor heal that that is broken; nor feed that that standeth still. These passages are too plain to need any explanation, for every reader will infer from them, that the spiritual shepherd ought to visit his flock. The example of Christ too, will show us the same thing, for he went about teaching, and doing good. St. Paul also taught, not only publicly, but from house to house.

The advantages resulting from such an intercourse are obviously very great. There is no way in which a minister if he be prudent in his management can, so generally secure the esteem, and affection of his people.

Such private interviews will afford the best opportunities likewise, for him to discover the views, and feelings, of every one, upon the subject of religion, and therefore he will better understand how to adopt his preaching to his audience. Whatever knowledge a physician may have of diseases in general, he wants to attend to each particular case, before he undertakes to prescribe.

To the young, and to the aged, and to persons of all ages, and of all characters, it may be farther observed, a word might be dropped in conversation, which would be more thought of, and be more profitable than any instruction, publicly delivered.

As it was while men slept, that the enemy sowed tares among the wheat, it is, probably, owing in a great measure, to want of vigilance, and attention, in ministers that difficulties spring up, and continue, in societies, and in churches, and, that so many bad practices are introduced.

Should it be thought that I make too much to depend upon this matter, let it be recollected what has, commonly, been the consequence when a minister has made it his business to go around among his people, having nothing else in view, but to converse with them about their spiritual affairs. Has any experiment ever been made, which, has so invariably, resulted in a revival of religion.

We might dwell longer upon the duties of the pastoral office, but the time is so far elapsed, that the discourse

must be brought to a conclusion with some very brief addresses.

Let me say to my brethren in the ministry, that we have undertaken a great work, and, that we are accountable for the manner in which we perform it, and for the motives which govern us in our conduct. If we have proper views of what is our own glory, we shall seek the glory of God. Let us be faithful, and we shall be strengthened as our labors may require, supported under trials; and rewarded in the great day.

I cherish the hope my dear Sir, that you who are about to be consecrated as the minister of Jesus Christ to this people, will be willing to spend your life in the service of your master. You must suppose, that I feel more than a common interest in your case; for I consider you as one of the lambs of my flock. Pardon me, that I paid no more attention to you at that early, and tender, season, when I might have been instrumental of doing you some good.

The circumstances of your establishment in this place are favorable to your usefulness; for you have the confidence, and affection of the people. The labors of your predecessors here, have been blessed, and we trust, that God will not suffer you to labor in vain, and to spend your strength for nought. Seek his glory, and in this way, you will be sure of obtaining his blessing. Take heed unto thyself; and unto thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Though my heart aches when I recollect how unfaithful I have been in my Master's service, my own experience is to me sufficient testimony, that the employment of a minister is of all employments the most delightful.

The Mantuan Bard extolled a shepherd's life;
The peaceful crook, and walks remote from strife;
But surely Tityrus must yield the palm;
The christian shepherd knows sublimer calm;
He feeds the sheep for which the Savior died;
A kin to angels; and to God allied.

chapter of Zechariah, where judgments are predicted, the Lord says, For lo I will raise up a shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off; neither shall seek the young one; nor heal that that is broken; nor feed that that standeth still. . These passages are too plain to need any explanation, for every reader will infer from them, that the spiritual shepherd ought to visit his flock. The example of Christ too, will show us the same thing, for he went about teaching, and doing good. St. Paul also taught, not only publicly, but from house to house.

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He feeds the sheep for which the Savior died;
A kin to angels; and to God allied.

I congratulate the church, and the people of this society, that they are so happily united in the choice of a minister. I hope, my friends you will consider the nature of his business, and afford him all the encouragement which you can in the performance of it; for his success will be your advantage. Let us hear from you, that you are flocking into the kingdom of God. Let the light in this candlestick shine over all the surrounding country.

In some places the evening of such a solemn day as this, has been spent in mirth, and festivity. If this is an indication of a polished state of society, I hope the day is far distant, when this people will be sufficiently polished, for such a practice to be introduced among them. Far more consistent would it be, for all descriptions of people, to be importunately calling upon God to open their hearts to receive the glad tidings of salvation.

May God in mercy grant, that every individual in this assembly may be profited by the solemnities of this day.

SERMON XVII.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW MEETING HOUSE IN WORTHINGTON,
DEC. 28th. 1825.

II. CHRONICLES ii, 4.

Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shew-bread, and for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel.

THE God who made the world, has ever had a people in the world to worship him. Our first parents were created holy, and continued so, until they ate the forbidden fruit. For that sin, they were doubtless, brought to repentance, and restored to the favor of their Maker. As the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them, it is thought altogether probable, that the bodies of the animals were offered in sacrifice. Cain and Abel, the first that were born, brought their offerings unto the Lord, though with a very different temper of mind, and those offerings, in the New Testament, are called sacrifices.

Sacrifices before the flood might be burned upon the ground, for the first altar of which we have an account, is the one which Noah builded after he and his family came

out of the ark. Altars were generally, if not always, in ancient times, made of earth or rough stones.

The tabernacle, which was set up in the wilderness, was sanctified, and we are informed particularly, of the offerings presented at the dedication. This tabernacle, made by Bezaleel, and Aholiab, though designed for temporary use, must have been very expensive; for it may be seen in the thirty-eighth chapter of Exodus, where the sum of the gold, and silver, employed about it, is given in talents, and shekels, that that sum alone, independently of all the other expenses, would build one hundred and thirty-five such houses as this in which we are now assembled.

The tabernacle having for many years accompanied the Hebrew camp, was established after the conquest of Canaan, first at Shiloh; then at Shechem; then at Nob: and then at Gibeon. This continued to be God's house until the temple was builded, and dedicated; a period of about five hundred years; and then the ark, which had been connected with the tabernacle, was placed in the temple.

It was David's intention to build the temple, and he spoke of it to Nathan the prophet; but as he had been a man of war and had shed much blood, though the Lord approved of his intention, he reserved the work for the quiet reign of Solomon his son, and successor. David however made great preparation for the building, and was altogether satisfied to commit to other hands what he had intended to do himself.

The place appointed for this magnificent edifice was mount Moriah, where Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac; and where Ornan, the Jebusite had his threshing floor.

When Solomon undertook the work he applied to Hiram, King of Tyre, for such materials as he needed, and for the assistance of his artisans. Hiram had been the friend of his father; and it is thought, that he was a worshipper of the true God. He readily granted whatever Solomon asked for, and sent him a man of his own name, skilful to work in every thing for which he might be needed.

The words now selected for consideration are taken from Solomon's communication to Hiram; and as they con-

tain things of importance to us all, and things which relate to the occasion which has convened us, we may be profited by bestowing upon them some particular attention.

We are first to take notice of the object which Solomon had in view, as he in general terms, announces it. Behold I build an house to the name of the Lord my God. It was not to be a palace for him to dwell in; nor was it to be erected for the purpose of adding splendor to the city of his royal residence, and to his kingdom, but it was to be a house for religious worship. The manner in which he speaks of it will show us too, that he had definite ideas of religious worship, and did not think, that whatever may be so called, is entitled to that appellation. Idolatry was early introduced into the world, either before the flood or soon after; and in the days of Solomon, many idols, under different names, had their temples, and their worshippers. Indeed, with the exception of the Israelites, idolatry was then spread over all the nations of the earth.

Though Solomon, towards the close of his life, in consequence of his unjustifiable matrimonial connexions, went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and though he builded an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem; and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon, and though he did likewise for all his strange wives, which burnt incense, and sacrifices unto their gods; it is very evident, that in the early part of his reign, he regarded these lying vanities with suitable abhorrence; and, that he had no expectation, when he builded the temple of adding himself to the number of their stupid worshippers.

Though Solomon lived long before true religion was denominated christianity, he had, essentially, the same view of religion which christians have ever entertained; and worshipped God, under the same name of distinction; so, that we should do him injustice were we to suppose, that keeping aloof from the gods of the earth, he recognized but one God, having however no clear, and definite, ideas, concerning his name, and concerning what constitutes his character.

Christ is frequently called Lord, and Solomon seems so to have understood it; for otherwise, he probably would not have mentioned Lord in connexion with God, but would have expressed his whole meaning by saying, I build a house to the name of my God.

Trinity is not a scriptural term, but it represents God as he is represented, very clearly in the New Testament; and not very obscurely, in the Old. When the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and when God had created the heavens, and the earth; or this world and the various animals, and things belonging to it, and connected with it, to complete the wonderful work he said, Let us make man in our image; after our likeness. It is obvious that this language can be intelligible only in one way of interpreting it. We may, with great propriety ask in this case, With whom took he counsel?

Christ said to the Jews, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Who but the Son of God farther, could he be who frequently appeared in ancient times, under the name of the angel of the Lord? In the second psalm it is written, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him. What son, but the Son of God, has power to kill, and to make alive? Whether Agur, the son of Jakeh, was Solomon or not, we learn something very interesting from his words in relation to this matter. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended; who hath gathered the wind in his fists; who hath bound the waters in a garment; who hath established all the ends of the earth, what is his name; and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell? Is not this passage exactly parallel with the following, No man, or no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Is it not the obvious meaning of both these passages, that there is in the Godhead, Father, and Son; and, that both are alike incomprehensible?

In the scriptures of the Old Testament which have been quoted, we have mention made of God; of the Son of God; and of the Spirit of God; and is not this a distinct exhibition of God the Father, God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit? It was therefore, to the name of this God; or to God under this name, sustaining this mysterious character, that Solomon intended to build his house.

This was in exact conformity to the instruction which David gave him, a little before his death, in his last solemn communication upon the subject of building the temple. And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father; and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.

Solomon would readily understand who the God of his father was; or what ideas his father had of God, both from his conversation upon the subject, and from his psalms. Nothing can be more explicit than the hundred and tenth psalm, the first verse of which is as follows: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

That difference in sentiment which now exists relative to the character of God, may be traced back, in the sacred history, to a very early period. Korah and his company of two hundred and fifty princes, said to Moses, and Aaron, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. If all the congregation of Israel were holy, all mankind must be holy too; and must not they who concluded this to be the case, suppose a Savior to be altogether unnecessary? Was there then not a wide difference between the opinion entertained by Moses, and Aaron, and that which was advanced by Korah, and his company? I will mention but one instance more. Cain, and Abel, brought each one an offering unto the Lord. Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, a slain sacrifice, evidencing his faith in the blood of the atonement; but Cain brought only of the fruits of the ground, presumptuously disregarding the method

which God had prescribed for sinners in their approaches to him, and showing, that his dependance was upon the merit of his own offering, and not upon that sacrifice of which all other sacrifices were but typical representations.

Unless the meaning of Solomon be misapprehended, another idea is conveyed in his communication. However far he might be removed from idolatry, and from heresy he could not, with propriety, have said, Behold I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, unless he had considered himself to be one of God's people. Though his strange departure from the path of duty in the latter part of his life has furnished occasion for the enemies of religion to speak reproachfully of his character, the evidence stands recorded upon the pages of eternal truth, that he was a subject of grace, a child of God. His two names, Solomon, and Jedidiah, are both descriptive; the former signifying peaceable; and the latter beloved of the Lord. As neither of these names would have been applicable to him, had he been an unrenewed sinner; and as it is expressly declared, that the Lord loved him, and, that he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and called his name Jedidiah; and as his writings occupy a place in the sacred canon, the proof is irresistible that he belonged to the family of God.

We are next to consider, that this house which Solomon was about to build to the Lord his God, was to be dedicated to him. Dwelling houses, among the Israelites, at least in ancient times, were dedicated; and though this laudable practice has not been generally followed by other people, the dedication of the ark, and, of the temple, probably originated the practice of dedicating houses of public worship, in all ages, and in all countries, where the true God has been known, and adored. An house that is dedicated to God as his habitation, and for an assembly to worship in, is to be viewed as exclusively devoted to this purpose.

When Christ was upon earth, he found the temple converted to a very different use from that for which it was designed; a part being turned into a market for different kinds of animals, particularly oxen, sheep and doves, and a part being occupied by money changers, or, as we should call them, brokers, who had their tables, and whatever other ap-

paratus might be necessary for the transaction of their business. This was indeed, substituting desecration for dedication. When Christ had with a scourge of small cords, driven the factors out of the temple; and removed all that belonged to them, he said, as St. John has recorded it, Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise; and as St. Matthew has recorded it; with reference, as it is thought, to another time, It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.

As the temple was the house of worship for the nation of Israel, it must be obvious to every one, that all the people could not assemble in it, as we might in our houses of worship, and be together, at least, one day in every week; and therefore that the worship of that people, must be, circumstantially, different from any thing in which we are ever engaged. If we would understand the language of the text, we must consult other scriptures which relate to the same subject.

The lamp was always kept burning in the tabernacle of the congregation; and the sons of Aaron, according to their courses, and by lot, attended constantly, day and night, to supply it with oil; and to trim it; and to offer the appointed sacrifices; morning and evening; attended with the burning of incense. The lamp was kept burning to show, that the light of religion cannot be extinguished. The daily sacrifices represented the sacrifice of Christ, and the incense the prayers of the saints; and both the incense, and the sacrifices, were presented at the same time, to teach the people, that they could have access to God only through a Mediator.

Thus the temple service was performed, every day, by the stationary men, or representatives of the people; and it is to be presumed, that others, more or less, according to circumstances, took their proper place and joined in the worship, by offering up their prayers. We have an account of a multitude of people who were praying without at the time of incense, when an angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias. Men, and women, both, attended, for we are told of Simeon, and Anna. He was waiting for the conso-

lation of Israel; and doubtless, she was likewise, for she departed not from the temple, but served God, with fastings and prayer, night and day.

At the passover, the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, all the males, who were able, were required to be present at Jerusalem, from every part of the country, with their various oblations; and lest they should be afraid that some enemy might take advantage of their absence to invade their country, this remarkable promise was given them. Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year. Though the command, in this matter, respected only the male part of the population, women were not prohibited, but they were probably, left to govern their conduct in the affair, as circumstances should render expedient. It is said of Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, that they, went to Jerusalem every year, at the feast of the passover, Other women as well as Mary, it is to be presumed, attended the passover, and the other great feasts; and the concourse must have been very great, made up of persons of different ages, and sexes.

Beside the daily service of the temple, performed by those who were present; and the worship of such as gathered together at the feasts; it is to be observed, that the hours for offering the sacrifices, and burning the incense, being stated hours, were well understood throughout the land, and these hours all the people could set apart, for their own devotional exercise, keeping in mind what was going on at the temple.

In his prayer, at the dedication of the temple, Solomon made particular mention of the case of such persons as might be remote from the central place of worship, whether within the bounds of their country, or in captivity in some foreign land; and required, that their prayers might be heard, and answered when they presented them, looking towards Jerusalem, and the temple. Some hundreds of years subsequent to this period, Daniel, who was among the captives in Babylon, notwithstanding Jerusalem, and the temple, were destroyed, from motives, not of superstition, but of duty, daily opened his windows towards Jerusalem,

when he offered up his prayers. This shows that he had regard to the place which God had appointed for his worship, and that he understood the typical meaning of the sacrifices, and of the incense.

Though the burning of the incense stands as a distinct article in the text, it will be seen, that the consideration of it has been necessarily anticipated, and, that in the few things that have been said about it, it has been blended with other parts of the temple worship.

We come now to take notice of the continual shew bread. The shew bread was made into twelve loaves, containing each, two tenth deals or about six pints of flour; and these loaves, with frankincense upon them, were placed in two rows, upon a table made for the purpose of Shittim wood, and overlaid with pure gold. The frankincense was burned upon the altar; but the bread stood from one Sabbath to another; new loaves supplying the places of the old ones, and those which were removed weekly, being eaten by the priests in the holy place.

This was the appointment of God, and doubtless it was intended to convey important instruction to his people, in every age. The Israelites might learn from it their consecration to God; and be reminded, that one generation must pass away for another to come on, as the loaves were changed every week, upon the table.

As this, however, is but a general account of the typical intention of the shew bread, some more particular observations may not be amiss.

The number of loaves was twelve, and the number of tribes was twelve; and this circumstance was to show, that salvation is great and free, and that the provision made by the grace of God, is sufficient for all who stand in need. God, in the exercise of his sovereignty, made distinctions among the tribes of Israel; but if one tribe was more honored than another with respect to some things all were treated alike in this, that they had the offer of pardon and of eternal life, upon exactly the same terms. Thus the proof was before the eyes of the people, that when sinners die in their sins, they go to destruction of their own choice.

This bread was placed in the temple, to represent to the people, that if they would have their souls fed, they must

go to the temple for the means of spiritual sustenance, or when their circumstances rendered this impracticable, their thoughts must be there; and they must send their prayers to heaven, with reference to the place to which they could not go themselves. As it is a common thing for proud sinners to plead by way of excuse for the neglect of public worship, that an omnipresent God can have no regard to one place more than to another, and, that all places are equally advantageous for the performance of his service, particular directions were given upon this subject long before the temple was builded, and they may be found in the twelfth chapter of Duteronomy. The service of God, however, is reasonable. Nothing is required but what can be performed and therefore an exempt case is provided for in the eleventh chapter of Ezekiel, Thus saith the Lord God, Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary, in the countries where they shall come.

The shew bread was always upon the table, that the people might understand that the Lord had never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. The deceitful heart will often suggest, that though benefit may sometimes be derived from attending upon public worship, the case may be so circumstanced, that no good can be expected. The weather may not be favorable; the distance may be too great; our apparel may be too homely, or what is exhibited may be wanting in ingenuity, or not be attended with the wisdom of words. But if the Sabbath was made for man, who has a right to say, that no profit may be expected from the observance of it? Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.

The table of shew bread was every sabbath covered with new loaves, to teach men, that religion, to all who are possessed of it, is a new thing continually, whatever attainments they may make, and, that those who make dependance upon joys that are past, instead of forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, are indulging themselves in quite erroneous, and dangerous calculations.

It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat the shew bread; and as their office required that they should be distinguished for holiness, however otherwise it might be with them, was not the law respecting this matter, intended, among other things, to impress it upon the mind of every one, that holiness is essential to salvation, and, that those who are not holy cannot partake of its joys?

If what has now been said explanatory of the meaning of the shew bread, should be thought in any thing to be incorrect, let me be pardoned, as no commentator whom I have had opportunity to consult, very particularly points out what it was. The shew bread, undoubtedly was of great typical signification, and we may be sure of deriving some instruction from it, if we seriously and closely attend to it.

Next to the shew bread, we find Solomon spoke of the burnt offerings. Burnt offerings were accompanied with meat offerings, and drink offerings; and what was presented was wholly consumed upon the altar. The entire consumption of the offering upon the altar, was to show the people their entire dependance upon God for every good thing; and, that they ought to make a surrendry of whatever they possessed to his disposal. They might learn from it likewise, that it was of the Lord's mercies, that they were not consumed themselves, as their offerings were burned up before their eyes upon the altar; and that their guilt must be punished with destruction in their own persons, unless atoned for, by one who should suffer in their stead.

These offerings were to be presented daily, morning, and evening, and doubled upon the sabbaths, new moons, and other solemn feasts. It is not necessary to name all the feasts of the Lord which were solemnly enjoined, and to point out the end for which they were severally intended.

We have now taken a summary view of the things contained in the passage before us, and we may see, that the worship of the temple was a solemn approach of the people to God, and attended in every part of it, with an important typical signification.

The ancient dispensation continued its appointed time, and answered well the purposes for which it was intended.

We live under the more luminous dispensation of the Gospel, and sensible objects are not made use of to convey to us, spiritual instruction.

We cannot look from the place in which we are assembled, and see the pool of Siloam where the man who was born blind washed and received his sight. We are not presented with the lamp which burned without ever going out, nor with the fire which was kindled from heaven. We cannot see the altar of burnt offering; nor the altar of incense; nor the smoke of the incense, ascending with the smoke of the sacrifices. We cannot see the pot of manna; nor Aaron's rod that budded; nor the table of shew bread with the loaves. We cannot behold the high priest arrayed in the garments of his sacred office, nor the Holiest of all, in which was lodged the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, whose lid was the mercy seat, covered with the wings of the cherubim. We cannot see the cloud of glory which hovered over the mercy seat, and in which the Lord promised to appear.

Though these things, adapted to make profitable impression upon minds soberly inclined, belonged to other people, and to other times, we may have all which was represented by them; and therefore our condition is one of superior advantage; for many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which we see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which we hear, and have not heard them.

Our advantages appear, not only in this, that we live at a period when the types have had their accomplishment, but in this also, that while the Israelites had but one place for public worship, at least when the temple was builded; among us a house may be found in almost every place, in which the people may assemble.

When this town had hardly put off the appearance of a wilderness, the people, few in number, and scantily furnished with means, erected a house for the worship of God, which has been kept in existence to the present time; and which, we hope, has not been altogether a building without profit.

We are now witnesses to the godness of God, in that he has so ordered it in his providence, that a new house is

substituted for an old one; and that we are permitted to assemble in it, upon this occasion.

But we are not come together to look at a bauble, to say, Behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here; nor to admire the foundation, or the superstructure. This is not the time to compliment the master builder upon the display which he has made of his skill, and to speak of the proportions of the house, and the arch over our heads, with the columns, and curves; the finishing and painting. We may however recollect with gratitude, that harmony of feeling begins to take the place of animosity; and that the eye of the passenger, in almost every direction, will present him with proof that we maintain, at least, the form of godliness, among us.

Our business at present is to dedicate this house. Have we thought of the solemnity of the business; and have we come from our closets prepared to perform it understandingly?

As the organ of communication at this time, let me say, that we do not dedicate this house to the gods many and lords many, of pagan antiquity; or of modern paganism. We do not bow in the house of Rimmon, nor are we worshipers of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter: nor do we hail, with acclamations, the car of Juggernaut, as the wooden god rolls in senseless majesty over the bodies of his expiring victims. Such abominations belong to dark places where are to be found the habitations of cruelty, and where the people perish for lack of vision.

The land in which we were born, and educated, is a section of the christian world; and we have ever had access to the Oracles of God, to guide us in our faith; and to govern us in our practice. But are errors local; and is truth bounded by lines of latitude, and longitude: or is the moral world divided as the natural world is, so that in speaking of both, it is proper to use the same language; and tell of the zones; torrid, frigid and temperate? Geographical boundaries have nothing to do with a case of this kind. In the most highly favored land upon which the sun sheds his beams, sentiments may be entertained, the most incoherent, and the criminality of error, is always in proportion

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Lest my tenacity upon this subject should be denominated bigotry, I ask the patient attention of my audience to some reasons which will be offered, in addition to what has been said, to show that a house for public worship should be dedicated to God with the acknowledgment of that mysterious distinction of his name which has been mentioned.

As might be expected admitting this to be a radical truth, it appears upon the first page of the Bible, and upon the last, gives to the prophecies their principal significance; and explains what otherwise would be inexplicable, the ceremonial worship of the ancient church. It may be said also, that beginning with Adam, and following the generations down, we may find, concerning every individual of whom the sacred scriptures give an account, the proof of an agreement among the people of God, in this fundamental article of faith.

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gible, by those who deny his deity, for it is contained in the following words, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptising them in, or perhaps more properly, into, the name of the Father; and of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost. Here is but one name and yet it is applied to the Father; the Son; and the Holy Ghost; and these are placed upon a perfect equality. If the Son be not God, whatever else he may be, he must be a creature of God; and if the Holy Ghost be not God, he must be a creature likewise; or an attribute; and what a strange mixture of things, altogether dissimilar, would such a supposition make?

Should it be asserted, that Christ never commanded his disciples to worship him, I would ask by way of reply, whether he ever commanded them not to worship him, and whether they could have honored the Son even as all ought to honor the Father, agreeably to his own words, without worshiping him? They did repeatedly worship him; and the last act of St. Steven's life was worship directed to the Son of God, for he died saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit! The apprehensions which the Jews had of Christ, would be considered as valid testimony respecting his claim in any court of inquiry, and they sought to kill him because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. For proof of the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost, it will be sufficient to refer to the case of Ananias, for Peter charged him with lying unto God, because he had lied to the Holy Ghost.

The last reason which will be mentioned to show, that a house for public worship ought to be dedicated to God, the Father; Son; and Holy Ghost, is this, that no instance stands recorded, and it is presumed no one was ever known, in which a revival of religion took place; or to speak in scripture language, in which times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord were experienced among a people, discarding this doctrine. How can this state of things be accounted for, except by admitting, that there is a doctrine which is according to godliness, and a doctrine which is contrary to godliness?

I am sensible, that many who assume the christian name, speak very contemptuously, of what are usually denominated revivals of religion; and congratulate themselves, that their superior understanding secures them from being carried away with such delusions.

Should we call that a revival of religion which is attended with no reformation among a people; and should cheating; and stealing; and lying; and swearing; and drinking; and carousing, be continued as at other times, we should have occasion to look out for some remedy more effectual to cure the evils of society, and of the various individuals who compose it. But was there no reformation in the time of Hezekiah: and after the day of pentecost; and has there never been any in Europe; or America; in the city; or in the wilderness; or in the various places where idol gods have been cast to the moles, and to the bats?

Those who cast off fear, and restrain prayer; who say, at least practically, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die; may, consistently with their own principles, be opposed to revivals of religion; but they cannot consistently be opposed to them because they effect no reformation, while no reformation is effected in themselves.

If we realize, that we are under the sentence of death; that we are accountable for our conduct, and liable every moment to be called out of time into eternity; our thoughts must be much occupied with the scenes which are before us, and we shall have something to check us in our course of folly, and vice; as well as to engage us in that work for which rational creatures were intended.

What is that doctrine which has a humbling effect upon the soul; makes the sinner ashamed of himself; forces him from every other refuge to the mercy of God; disposes him to a life of sobriety, and circumspection, and engages him to seek salvation. Find what that doctrine is, and you will find what doctrine ought to be preached, and what is the character of that God to whom a house of worship should be dedicated.

When a house dedicated to God, is intended to be a school room for the instruction of the principles of Socratic philosophy, or a theatre upon which to make a display of talents, and erudition, it cannot be expected, that God will record his name in it, and visit it with his blessing.

It was prophesied by Haggai, that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former; that is, that the temple builded by Zerubbabel, in consequence of the personal presence of Christ in it, the Desire of all nations, should exceed in glory the temple builded by Solomon; because that

though superior in splendor, was only a shadow of good things to come.

This prophecy of Haggai, it is to be hoped, may with some modification, be applied to the house in which we are now convened. In the former house of our worship, things have been seen, and heard, well worthy of attention, and calculated to enlarge, and enliven the heart. But this house should it be suffered to continue, until by natural, and unavoidable decay, it would crumble into ruins, may be expected, not only to outlive all who are now in it, but to survive generations yet to be born.

During its continuance therefore, many important changes will probably, be effected in the world, and in this place; and many glorious predictions concerning Zion's prosperity will be accomplished. Knowledge in every department, may be said to be on the increase, and the day will come, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas. Whatever successful efforts the god of this world may make in propagating error among its inhabitants, his triumphs will end in defeat, and holiness to the Lord will be inscribed upon the horses' bells. Religion is making rapid progress, notwithstanding the opposition which, in various ways, it meets with; and he who died on Calvary, will sprinkle all nations with his atoning blood. Things will be so changed, that the prophecy concerning the new heavens and the new earth, will be fully realized.

Here abler men will preach the gospel; and here more faithful pastors will feed the flock. Here the church of Christ will have a fresh unction from the Holy One, and when they gather around the table of their common Lord, to celebrate his dying love, it will not be with the feverish appetite of a sickly man who loaths the most delicious food, but in the vigorous exercise of faith, they will hunger and thirst after righteousness, and find refreshment to their souls in the consecrated symbols of the ordinance.

Brotherly love will so abound, as almost to supercede the necessity of inculcating it as a duty, and it will appear as strange to see the head of a family, a professor of godliness, go abroad to transact the business of the day before he has presented upon the family altar, his morning sacrifice, as it

would be to see him do the same thing before he had partaken of his morning meal.

When such shall be the state of things, it will not be difficult to form a choir of singers, who will sing with the spirit, and with the understanding, and who will be ashamed of the best music which they can make with their voices, if their hearts be out of tune. The sabbath too will be spent with such solemnity, by all the people, that neither sleeping; nor laughing; nor sneering; nor inattention, will disturb the exercises.

The subject will now be brought to a close with a few reflections. The occasion which has convened us is one of great solemnity; and if we do not so consider it, we must be as insensible as the seats which we occupy. How many have gone to the house appointed for all living, since it was in contemplation to build this house; your parents; and children; and brethren; and sisters; and husbands, and wives. Some are now alive, in a feeble, broken state, mere remnants of themselves; and expecting never again to join this congregation, but to be numbered shortly with the great congregation of the dead. Among all those who have taken the deepest interest in the erection of this house, is there an individual, concerning whom it may not, with the greatest propriety, be said, that the shadow of the degrees is going down upon the sun-dial? We shall all soon be forgotten as a dead man out of mind; and laid aside like a broken vessel. But the most melancholy circumstance in our case is this, that religion appears to be thrown into the back ground; and, that it may so generally, be said of the people, that for the present, they come not to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.

It is pertinent for us to inquire in the language of the psalmist, Will the Lord cast off for ever; and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever; doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Let us unitedly request, that God to whom we now dedicate this house, will condescend to take it for his resting place; that Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, will here appear in his grace, and glory; and that the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to sanctify the soul, will descend upon us, as he descended at the day of pentecost, with mighty, convincing, and converting, power!

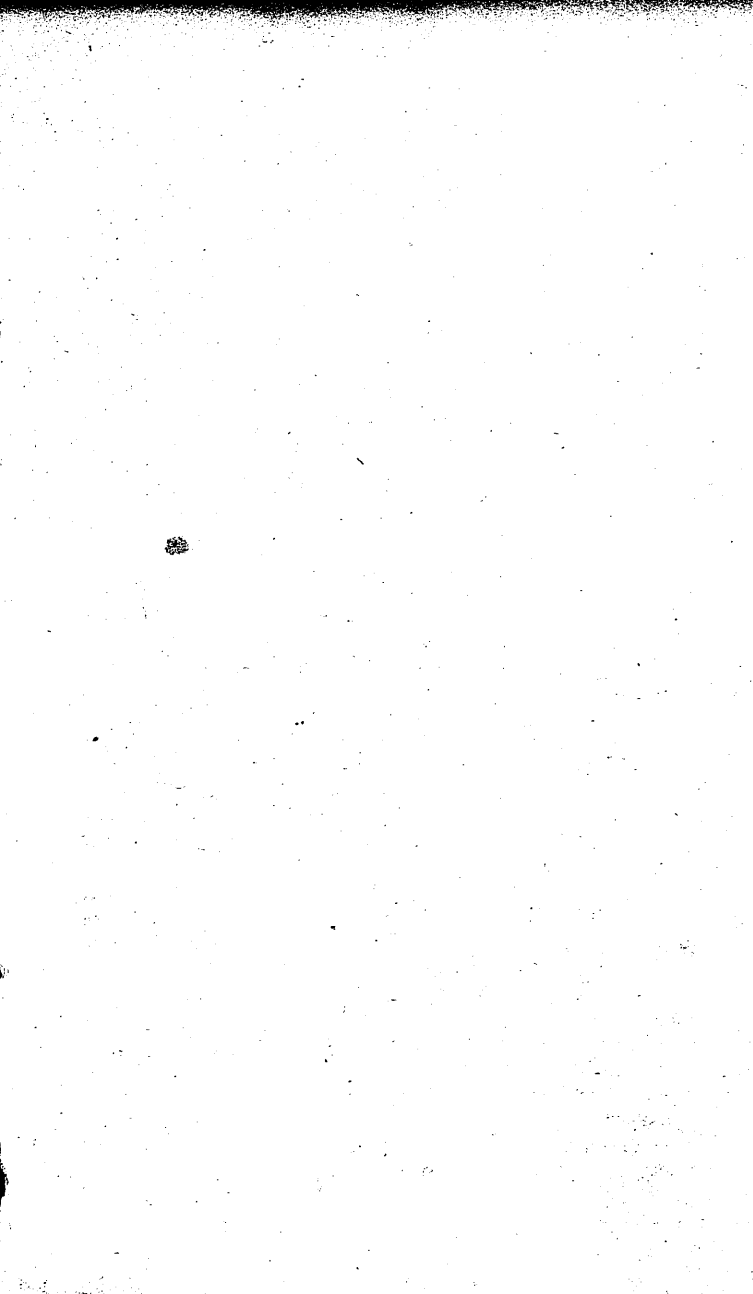


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